the weekly Standard

OCTOBER 15, 2007 • $3.95

GOLF, NATURALLY
DEAN BARNETT

Portrait of an American Artist

Edward Hopper, in darkness and light

By Martha Bayles

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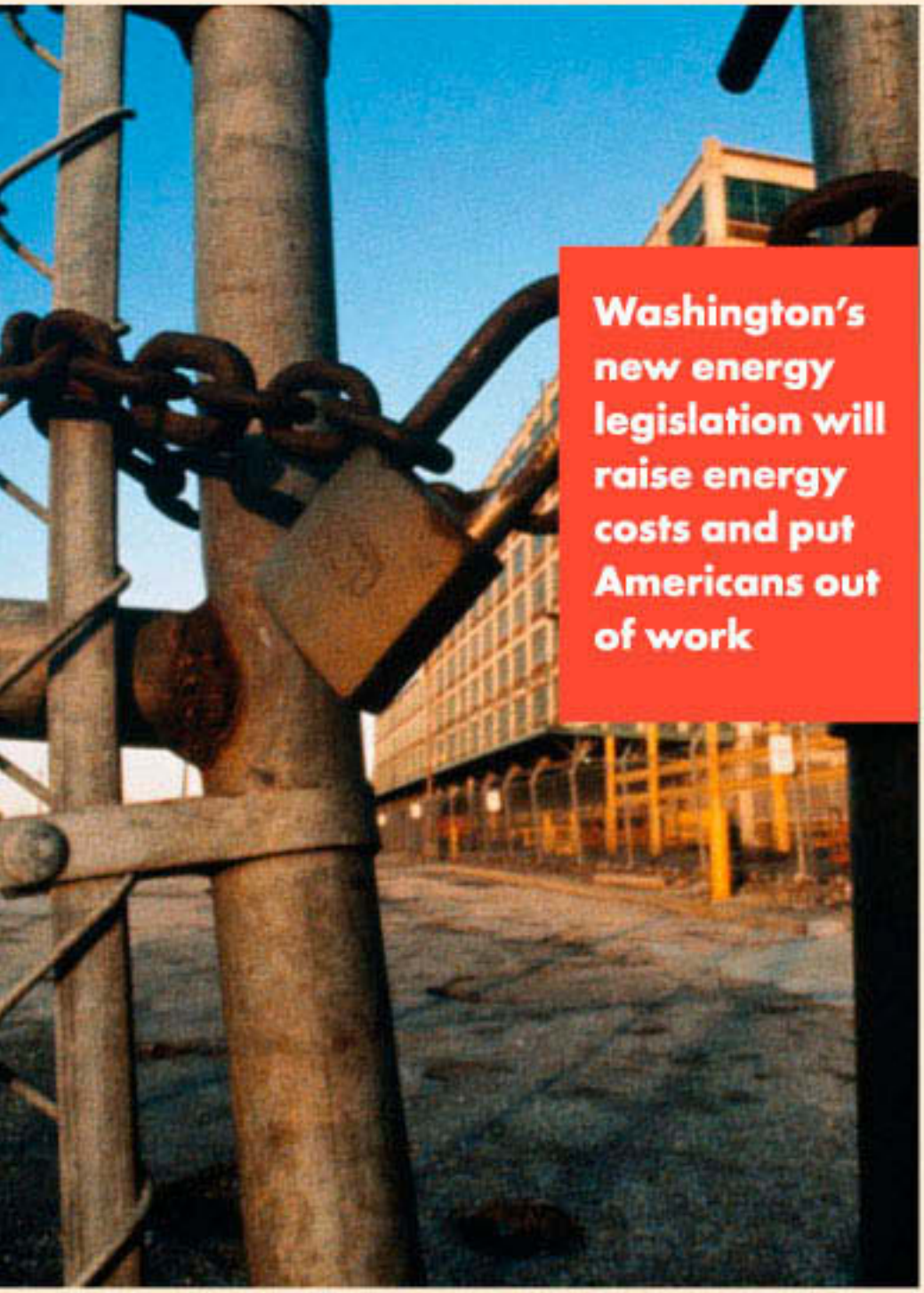
Can America's economy afford Congress' ~~energy~~ bill?

Layoffs, new taxes and cost spikes



Congress will soon consider sweeping new energy legislation that will raise energy taxes, cost American jobs and further limit the nation's access to domestic energy supplies.

The legislation's energy tax hikes and gasoline price controls will raise energy costs for American consumers, manufacturers and businesses – hurting economic growth and driving high-paying American jobs overseas. The legislation even reduces our ability to increase domestic oil and natural gas reserves here at home – increasing reliance on foreign sources of energy.

We need energy policies that support American jobs and increase supplies of energy from all sources to meet future generations' demand. Congress should reject these provisions of the energy bill and get to work on legislation to secure our energy future.

Reject Congress' Energy Bill

NAM National Association of Manufacturers

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

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In the new issue of the Hoover Digest . . .

Purple Voters in the Golden State

California's Republican Party drifted off the centrist track, but its voters didn't.

To a younger generation of political observers, California is the quintessential blue state. It's Hollywood and San Francisco, medicinal marijuana and gay marriage, self-esteem, tree-sitters—a long list of liberal symbols that raise the ire of conservative commentators. But a longer view shows that the Democratic turn in California is a relatively new, and tentative, chapter.

Until recently, Republicans were competitive in the Golden State. Moreover, Democratic registration has been stalled since 1994, whereas independents have proliferated. For most of the last half of the twentieth century, California was, if not a red state, at least reddish-purple (the legislature is another story). Why, then, are Republicans in a slump? Because they abandoned a pragmatic, broad-based identity for ideology and a narrow base. It worked elsewhere, but in California the road to electoral success favors candidates who are not just economically conservative but socially tolerant.

—Morris P. Fiorina and Samuel J. Abrams

Stalin behind Closed Doors: The Lost Kremlin Stenograms

Transcripts of crucial Soviet power struggles come to light after 70 years.

A treasure has been found in formerly top-secret Soviet archives: transcripts of discussions by the USSR's ruling body as it struggled over the young country's future. The dialogues—a thousand pages long and peppered with crude jokes, jeers, and threats—came to light only four years ago. They offer a vivid new window into the Great Terror and the Stalin-Trotsky showdown.

"You always have the last word," Trotsky charges in one clash. Stalin retorts, "You are lying because you are a pitiful coward who fears the truth." Stalin indeed gets the last word—at the end of the 15 years chronicled by the transcripts, his power is total. He can even concede that liquidating 40,000 of the communist elite might have been a mistake—but at least they were easy to replace. Hoover Institution researchers, continuing their work of collecting significant Soviet state and party documents, will publish the Politburo dialogues in November. Scholars will be poring over them for years.

—Paul R. Gregory

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Edward Hopper, Man of the Right

Read Martha Bayles's essay on page 32 of this issue for an appreciation of the work of Edward Hopper, one of America's greatest 20th-century painters and the man who gave us *Nighthawks*, that scene of three lonely customers and a waiter at a near-empty diner (which THE SCRAPBOOK grew to love while playing the Masterpiece board game).

Meanwhile, here in the Philistine's corner of the magazine, we'd like to point out that Hopper was distinctive in another way, particularly among modern artists. He was a conservative, a Republican, an anti-Communist, and a patriot. He refused to broadcast his political views, as so many artists do today. And he discussed politics only with his closest friends. Few knew that he and his wife Jo were fierce critics of President Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal and regretted not having voted in 1936—against FDR. (You can find these details and others in Gail Levin's *Edward Hopper: An Intimate Biography.*)

Hopper never let his politics seep into his paintings. He believed that art should "never be reduced to sociology." The caricatures of Daumier, that most political of French artists, were great in spite of their political content, he felt. An associate noted that when Hopper returned from a trip to Mexico in 1943, the radical politics of that country didn't show up in his paintings. "Probably he is not a communist," the associate said. "He doesn't paint like one."

John Dos Passos, the novelist, was a leftist when he knew Hopper in the 1930s and described him as "a sort of McKinley conservative"—an apt description. Hopper was a teenager during the McKinley presidency, and as he grew older he was nostalgic about what he felt was America's virtuous past. During World War I, he drew patriotic posters promoting the allied side. In World War II, he served as a volunteer air raid warden on Cape Cod.

Hopper and his wife were appalled not only by what she once described as FDR's "astounding pump priming expenditures of billions," but also his effort to pack the Supreme Court. Hopper regarded this as part of an attempt to create a dictatorship. Both he and Jo joined the National Organization for Hands Off the Supreme Court. Hopper wrote to Vice President John Nance Garner and both New York senators to complain about the court packing.

Hopper's political activity was anything but self-aggrandizing. When asked by the Treasury Department to make sketches for murals at the post office in Portland, Maine, he quietly declined—without alerting the press of his stand on principle. But a friend once spoke of "the intensity and extent of his [political] engagement and rage." And though he lived through most tumultuous times, his conservatism never wavered. ♦

Brave Newt World

We were sorry to learn last week that Newt Gingrich won't be entering the presidential race after all. The man is unique and would have enlivened our civic life. As Jonathan V. Last reported on the *Daily Standard*, Newt "celebrated the 13th anniversary of the signing of the Contract With America by holding an event dubbed 'Solutions Day.' Where the Contract With America had been presented on the steps of the West Front of the Capitol in September of 1994, Gingrich's Solutions Day address was held on the West Front of the Virtual Capitol inside the game Second Life.

"The event began with Gingrich's Second Life avatar flying through the air and then falling to earth on the Capitol steps. As his arms and legs flailed

Cyber Newt

during the landing, his virtual tie fluttered up about his face. The virtual Gingrich, clad in slacks, a blue dress shirt, a yellow tie, and silver-rimmed spectacles, was, in keeping with the Second Life ethos, a younger, trimmer version of the former speaker."

Some have argued that the Republican party is better off without its one-time standard bearer in the race—that he is too polarizing a figure to win a national election, but talented enough a politician to have won some GOP primaries and greatly complicated the race for the other candidates. All the more reason to wish he had taken the plunge: The more the merrier is our philosophy, and the other candidates would have improved by having to compete. ♦

Arnold Beichman's Columbia

THE SCRAPBOOK received a reminiscence from our old friend Arnold Beichman last week. Beichman, a research fellow at the Hoover Institu-

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(Classic Steiner, reprinted from our issue of February 3, 2003)

tion, was present for the 1933 version of Ahmadinejad's visit to Columbia. He writes:

"The big fuss at Columbia University over the invitation to and appearance of Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as a speaker created quite a campus fuss. It brought back seven decades-old memories of when I was a senior at Columbia and editor in chief of the *Columbia Daily Spectator*, the student daily. And the campus protests once more prove the truth of the French maxim, *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*—the more things change, the more they remain the same.

"My experience in 1933 had to do with Adolf Hitler who had just come into power. Hitler represented the voice of fascism, introduced in Italy in 1922 by Benito Mussolini. Hitler, an enemy of the Jews, went far beyond Mussolini, who was no anti-Semite.

"The Hitler problem hit the Columbia campus with a bang when it was announced that Hans Luther, the German ambassador, would deliver a lecture at a campus auditorium. A delegation from the Columbia Social Problems Club (a.k.a. Young Communist League) came to my office and urged me to publish an editorial demanding that Luther be barred from speaking at Columbia. Their slogan was: 'No freedom of speech for fascists.'

"I asked the delegation, How about the fact that Columbia had invited Soviet ambassador Maxim Litvinov to do a lecture, and there were no protests? Came the answer from the YCL spokesman: There could be no such analogy. Luther represented a 'gangster' government. Well, was there any freedom of speech or press, or independent trade unions in the USSR who could strike? Came the YCL answer: Why should the Soviet workers strike when they owned the means of production, eh?

"Many years later I came across this riveting passage in an essay by George Orwell: 'The sin of nearly all left-wingers from 1933 onwards is that they have wanted to be anti-Fascist without being anti-totalitarian.'

"As editor of the *Spectator* I opposed those who wanted Luther barred from speaking. Let him speak and let those who want to protest, protest. The German ambassador spoke, the protestors got somewhat rowdy, a few arrests were made, and we prepared for the next battle." ♦

Go Reuters, Seriously

A tip of The Scrapbook homburg to Reuters for its October 5 headline, "U.S. military says kills 37 Iraqi militants." It's not the most euphonious ever—"says kills" may not even be English—but the reader at least knows approximately what's going on. In the hands of the Associated Press, as we complained last week, it would have read, "Three dozen dead in Iraq violence." ♦

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Casual

Manners Makyth Man

My wife and I motored down to southside Virginia last weekend for a poignant event in the family chronicles: our last Parents' Weekend at Hampden-Sydney College, where our son is in his final year. The process of abandoning the nest can be prolonged in 21st-century America, I concede, but this was surely a significant step along the way.

If you think (or more likely, if you fear) that this is an introduction to a meditation on parenthood, or the unique relationship between son and father, or the way the years of childhood seem to have melted swiftly away, you can relax. My wife and I were sentimental on the subject for about three minutes—somewhere between Orange and Gordonsville, Virginia, on old Route 15—before settling into our customary Parents' Weekend subject of discussion: clothes.

I should begin by explaining that Hampden-Sydney is a very old (1776), very rigorous, very southern institution, steeped in tradition; and one of those traditions, happily revived in recent decades, is a certain mode of dress. I should also explain that Hampden-Sydney is one of two surviving all-male colleges in America, which leads to an interesting, not to say counterintuitive, observation: Instead of looking like slobs on occasions such as Parents' Weekend, the students tend to dress with a certain formality.

Not sober formality, I hasten to add, but a distinctive brand of preppy flair characteristic of the place. For example, in the stadium during football games, you can easily identify the H-SC men by their blue blazers, khaki trousers, wrinkled white shirts, bow ties, and horn-rimmed sunglasses. Some of the more adventurous types have a weakness for accessorizing with what I think of as golf wear—lime-green trousers, Bermuda shorts, pink polo shirts—but the prevailing style has a flavor of the afternoon lime-juice-and-gin at the country club, or better yet, collegiate America, ca. 1958.

No doubt, this impression is distressing to the Hampden-Sydney administration, but I revel in it—for above all, it signifies hope. I began my undergraduate career in the late 1960s when, as an inveterate coat-and-tie man, I found myself confronted by a campus culture of jeans, torn military blouses, greasy shoulder-length hair, and aviator glasses. I never succumbed to it myself; but I did compromise, to a certain extent, on the assumption that this ostentatiously slovenly uniform was the wave of the future.

DARREN GYGI

Well, I was wrong. In the fullness of time male American undergraduates, for the most part, recovered their senses. And at Hampden-Sydney, on Parents' Weekend, you can discern the clash of generations. While the dads wander the antebellum, tree-lined campus in shorts, open collars, and Bass Weejuns, their offspring sport penny loafers, grosgrain watchbands, and Southern Proper-brand ties. It's an interesting spectacle.

However, the sartorial debate that my wife and I have been carrying on these past four years may never be settled. She believes that this difference in dress between fathers and sons is a version of the generation gap: How instructively ironic, in her view, that the younger set is more formal than the Baby Boomers. My position, for what it's worth, is that the oldsters look upon Parents' Weekend as an informal event while the students are prompted to dress up for the occasion. (Accordingly, I position myself somewhere in the middle by going Saturday Casual: blazer, khaki chinos, blue buttoned-down shirt, no tie.)

Whatever the truth may be, I should point out that our son, in this sense, is indistinguishable from his fellows. But whether this is due to the pressure of conformity or (as I like to think) his father's wisdom, I cannot say. When he was born I resolved—as I suspect most fathers do—to impart certain fundamental verities. In my case, this did not involve an absorption in honor, or devotion to courage, or reverence for character (I left all that to his alluring mother) but relatively trivial things: basic equestrian skills, an appreciation for surreal humor, confirmation in the Episcopal church, the assurance that comes with knowing how to shift gears, tie a bow tie, etc.

I am pleased to report that my lead has largely been followed. On the matter of clothes, however, I sometimes wonder if I succeeded too well. For a while my son, in his formative years, always consulted me on questions of dress—peaked or shawl lapels for tuxedos, paisley ties and striped shirts, seersucker after Labor Day—he is now well on his way to surpassing me. His wardrobe is infinitely more varied, and elegant, than mine was at his age, and certainly more voluminous.

Which, when you consider the alternatives, is not the worst habit to have picked up in college.

Philip Terzian

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Read This Book

At the most recent Democratic presidential debate, Tim Russert asked the candidates to name their favorite Bible verse. The answers tended toward the unexceptionable—including the Sermon on the Mount (not a "verse," but who's counting?) and the Golden Rule. Watching the debate, I idly wondered how I'd respond.

Upon a bit of reflection, I think my answer would be Numbers 10:35, one of the verses read in synagogue on Saturday in preparation for the reading from the Torah. When the ark is opened, revealing the Torah scrolls, the congregation stands, as the Israelites stood at the base of Mt. Sinai, and chants the verse: "When the ark was carried forward, Moses would say, 'Arise, Lord! May Your enemies be scattered, may Your foes be put to flight.'" For some reason, this has always been one of my favorite moments in the service.

I don't know if Clarence Thomas has ever attended a Shabbat service, but I suspect he might like this verse too. Not because he's consumed by "rage" or because of his "roiling state of mind," as unfriendly commentators have claimed in the week since the publication of his memoir, *My Grandfather's Son*. In fact, the book, like the man, is remarkably calm, though it recounts times of justified anger, legitimate rage, and understandable roiling. But Thomas understands that he does have enemies, who stooped very low indeed to try to bring him down. And he has called on the Lord for strength to help him scatter them and put them to flight.

Thomas cites Scripture at key points in *My Grandfather's Son*. He writes that during the crucible of his Supreme Court confirmation fight, "It was in the consoling words of the prophet Isaiah that I found my own watchword: 'But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.'" And he closes the book with his prayer as he joins the Court: "Lord, grant me the wisdom to know what is right and the courage to do it. Amen."

Wisdom and courage: These are the themes of *My Grandfather's Son*. Thomas offers an education in practical wisdom and moral courage. Particularly instructive, and moving, is the portrait of his grandfather, Myers Anderson, who raised Thomas after his own father abandoned him as a toddler. Anderson was hard-working, upstanding, stern, and iron-willed. He made it possible for Thomas to grow up, to succeed, to become a man. He concealed his love for the boy out of fear that showing softness would undercut the discipline necessary to instill in his grandson a character strong enough to survive and flourish in a difficult world. His character building worked. But his iron will and forbidding demeanor made it hard for Thomas, as a young man, to get along with him.

One of the most gripping passages in the book is Thomas's account of what turned out to be his last meeting with his grandfather. His grandmother was in the hospital, and after Thomas had visited with her, he had "a wonderful talk, the best we'd ever had," with his grandfather. Afterward they embraced, "the first and only time in our lives we did so." Thomas hoped this might set the stage for a new and more intimate relationship with this man he revered, but he would never see him alive again.

Earlier, Thomas had described his grandfather's indulgent treatment of Thomas's son Jamal. "As far as Daddy [Thomas's grandfather] was concerned, Jamal could do no wrong." Thomas posed the question: "Tell me something, Daddy, you never make Jamal do anything he doesn't want to do. You let him do whatever he wants. You do whatever he asks you to do. But you *never* treated [my brother] and me that way. Why not?" His grandfather replied, "Jamal is not my responsibility."

As Thomas comments, "It really was as simple as that. Daddy had to raise us, but he only had to enjoy Jamal, so he kissed and hugged him." And Thomas goes on to wonder "how hard it had been for him to hide his affection from us. How often had he looked in on my brother and me as we slept, gazing at us with the same sweetness I saw each time he looked at Jamal? How often had he longed to hold us, hug us, grant our every wish, but held himself back for fear of letting us see his vulnerability, believing as he did that real love demanded not affection but discipline?"

Thomas's memoir raises fundamental questions of love and responsibility, family and character. His book is a brief for the stern and vigorous virtues, but in a context of faith and love. It's a delightful book—you really can't put it down—but it's also a source of moral education for young Americans. It could be almost as important a contribution to his beloved country as Clarence Thomas's work as a Supreme Court justice. And it suggests one more contribution he could make. Thomas in 2012!

—*William Kristol*

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S-chip of Fools

Republicans can't play defense on health care.

BY FRED BARNES

Rahm Emanuel, the chief intimidator for House Democrats, didn't go for subtlety. Republicans who oppose expansion of the S-chip program will be denying "10 million American children their health care," he told Major Garrett of Fox News. Chuck Schumer, his counterpart in the Senate, took the sorrowful approach. "We're all hurt as a country when a child is not covered by health care and goes to school sick," he said. In vetoing the S-chip bill, President Bush "sided with [the] tobacco industry instead of America's children." That blast came from the nice folks at the American Cancer Society, who favor the 61-cent hike in the cigarette tax that would pay for the S-chip increase.

It isn't going to be pleasant for Republicans who believe the new S-chip legislation is bad policy. But there's a way to resist the measure and neutralize the Democratic demagoguery without suffering too much political heartburn. It consists of three steps. First, you go negative and criticize the bill as "welfare for the middle class," which it is. Second, you go positive and offer an alternative. Third, you go big picture and show how an expanded S-chip program is inconsistent with the kind of health care system most Americans want.

S-chip expansion has been easy for Democrats to defend because it affects children, including millions without health insurance. But it's a free good for the recipients, paid for by taxpayers: By definition, it's welfare. Few oppose welfare for poor children, even for children living in families earning up to 200 percent of the poverty line ($41,300 for a family of four). That's whom S-chip was created to cover.

The bill vetoed by Bush, however, would offer S-chip for kids up to 300 percent of poverty ($61,950) in every state, or up to 400 percent ($82,600) in New York and perhaps other states. Millions of these children already have private insurance, but they wouldn't for long. They'd be switched to S-chip because it's free.

Supporters of the S-chip-plus bill don't have a credible answer for the crowding out of private insurance. They simply pass the buck, saying it's up to the states to limit the program to those currently uninsured. How will the states do this? The S-chippers don't say.

Then there are the half-a-million eligible poor kids who haven't gotten S-chip coverage and the 700,000 adults who have. Bush's idea of straightening out the program before expanding it makes sense. He calls it "poor kids first."

But merely opposing expansion of S-chip isn't sufficient. There are millions of children in households above the 200 percent cutoff without health insurance. Republicans need an alternative that's better than S-chip. That's step two.

Republican senator Mel Martinez has an alternative, an obvious one. "Rather than putting more people on a government-run program, we would advance tax credits to families with incomes between 200 percent and 300 percent of the poverty level," he said last week. This would be expensive—tax credits can be refundable—but not as costly as expanding S-chip. And tax credits wouldn't spur the deleterious trend toward government-run health care. They are part of any patient-run, market-driven reform.

There are four tests of any plan to reform the health care system: Does it make health care more accessible? Does it restrain soaring cost increases? Does it maximize patient choice? And does it generate more competition among hospitals, research institutions, pharmaceutical companies, producers of medical devices, and doctors?

The Martinez plan meets all four. S-chip-plus meets only the first test, increased access. It would drive up costs and effectively limit patient choice, which, again, is why Republicans—and Democrats, for that matter—who favor real reform voted against it. And putting opposition to a middle-class S-chip in the context of broader health care reform makes it more politically palatable.

The broader issue is likely to dominate the domestic policy debate in the 2008 election. As Karl Rove noted in the *Wall Street Journal*, it's a debate Republicans can win if they promote true reform rather than offer trimmed-down versions of Democratic schemes for greater government involvement in the health care system.

A sweeping reform of the kind President Bush, Rudy Giuliani, and Mitt Romney have been touting would assure that everyone can get health insurance—and get the kind that fits their needs. A 22-year-old may want cheap catastrophic coverage. Middle-class families could opt for paying routine doctor bills, but want coverage for hospital stays and drugs. Individuals who pay these bills are bound to be cost-conscious in ways third-party payers—usually their employers—are not.

Republican congressman Steve Chabot of Ohio voted against the S-chip bill, and he's been targeted for personal attack by Rahm Emanuel. Voting to fund the war in Iraq but not for expanding S-chip, as Chabot has, is "not the place you want to be," Emanuel says.

Yet Chabot is comfortable. "There

Fred Barnes is the executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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are about 118,000 children in Ohio that aren't getting S-chip which they ought to be entitled to," he told Major Garrett. "Instead of giving them health care," S-chip expansion would "give it to people that make as much as $83,000 a year." Cast in those terms, being against the bill is a no-brainer. ♦

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Disparate Housewives

The family lives of candidates tell us little about their quality as leaders. BY NOEMIE EMERY

The presidential campaign is young, yet in the lives of the candidates we already have the makings of a full season's run of *Desperate Housewives*. We have the ex-mayor who once held a press conference to announce to his second wife and the world that their marriage was over; his social-climbing (according to a hostile piece in an unfriendly glossy) third wife; the put-upon wife of a former president whose indiscretions led to our second impeachment; an attractive young lawyer who may be a touch too outspoken; and, saddest of all, a mother stricken with cancer, who makes use of her tragic, untouchable status to lob hand grenades at the foe.

Three of the top four Republican candidates have been divorced and remarried, one seems to be on the outs with his children, and one Democrat is a former first lady, elected to the Senate at first on the grounds that she had loyally stood by her husband after it turned out he had been using the Oval Office and pantries adjacent for trysts with an intern the age of their daughter, which he insisted were not really sex. Aaron Spelling at his most inventive never dreamed of such plot lines, and torrents of words have been written and uttered parsing their meaning, if any.

As a cover for indulging our low curiosity, we are told (or tell others) that this is all heavy with portent, that it is key to resolving the Character Issue, that until you know the state of the family, you don't know the man. This is possibly true, but when it comes to predicting performance in office, it is perfectly useless. History tells us there is little discernible connection between a politician's public behavior and the state of his personal life.

The Father of Our Country gave his country a Mother who was a fine general's wife and first lady, stalwart at winter quarters at Valley Forge and other primitive venues, gracious at New York and then Philadelphia in the delicate role of First Mate. (Their union was solid, though at the time of the marriage the groom himself had been less than wholehearted, being in love with his closest friend's wife.) Abraham Lincoln, usually rated the best of all presidents, gave us perhaps the worst First Lady in history, a self-absorbed clothes horse who may have spent even more money than Jackie but who, unlike Jackie, did not hold up well when her husband was murdered.

As husbands and fathers, most of our notable leaders were in many ways short of ideal. John Kennedy was a devoted father (and son and brother), but a difficult husband whose egregious philandering drove his wife to distraction, and shopping. Ronald Reagan was by all accounts a devoted mate to his second wife, but an uninvolved father whose two oldest children seemed hurt by his distance, and whose two youngest indulged in spells of rebellion that make those of Regan and Goneril seem tame. One left home to live with a rock star, changed her name so she wouldn't carry the name of her father, posed nude in *Playboy* to embarrass her father, and wrote several books—or at least, words on bound paper—that dragged her mother and father over hot, glowing coals. Her

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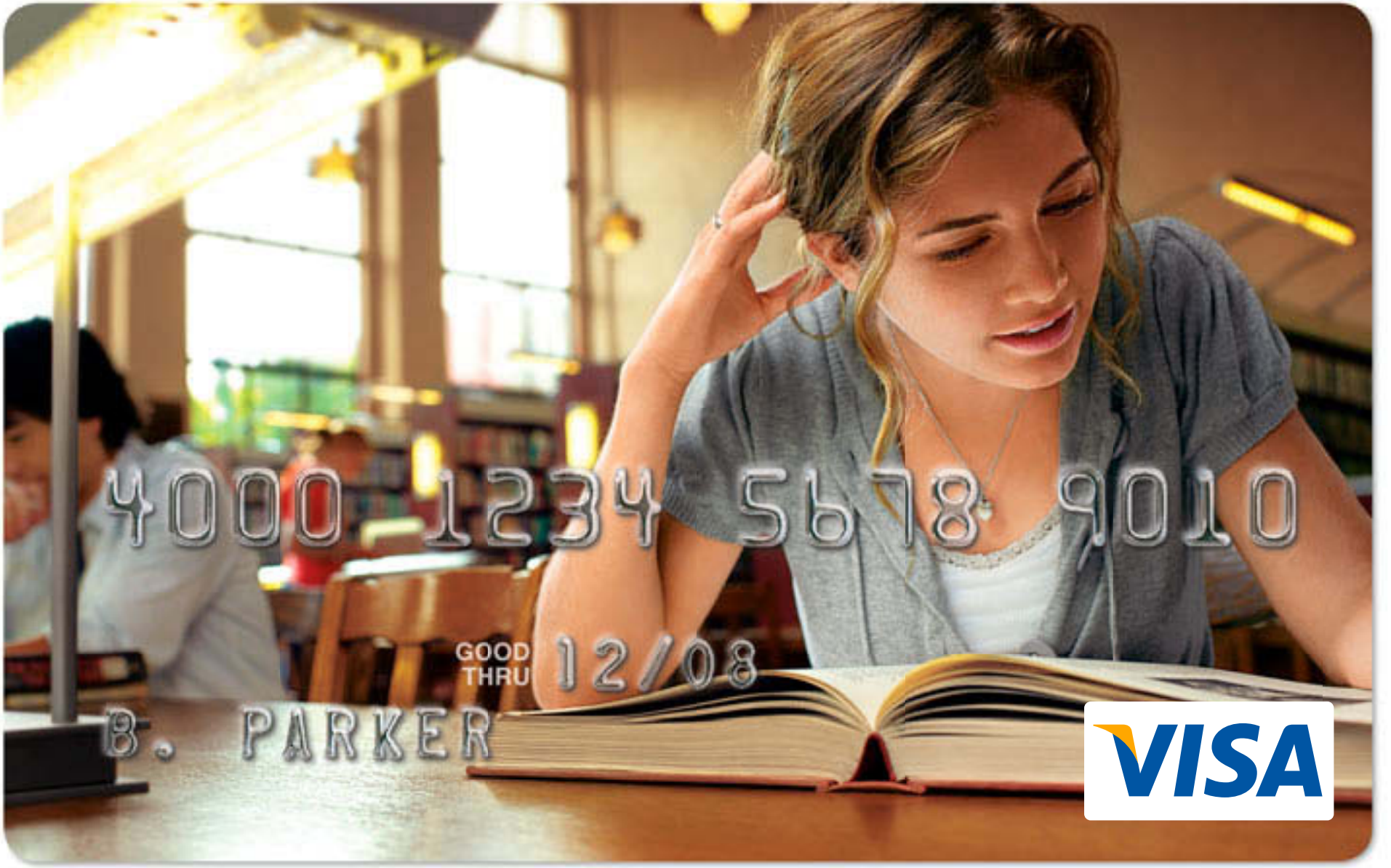

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brother went from a career in ballet to a pseudo-career as a political maven, his sole purpose being to tear down his father's beliefs and his party to the delight of a (usually) liberal audience, crowned by an appearance at the 2004 Democratic convention in Boston, where he mocked the ideals of his father's party.

As a public embarrassment, this rivals three of the four living sons of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, who also took pleasure in running down Dad. "Two sons worked for their father's bitterest enemies, and another married into a family that openly despised him," writes Doug Wead in his book, *All The Presidents' Children*. "One lobbied against parts of his legislative program in Congress. Another endorsed his father's opponent when he ran for a third term." A son-in-law killed himself. A daughter-in-law tried to commit suicide. Some of the sons wrote gossipy books that accused their parents of neglect and adultery. Hostility towards their father (and mother) ran through these siblings' careers.

Another admired political couple, John and Abigail Adams, had an idyllic marriage but made alcoholics of two out of three of their sons, and nervous wrecks out of all three. Thomas, the youngest, lived into his 60s, a ne'er-do-well and an embarrassment to his extended family, who were often called to make frantic visits to Boston to retrieve him following one of his drinking bouts. Charles died at age 30 in a Manhattan hovel, wholly estranged from his family. John Quincy, the nonalcoholic, followed the same pattern with his three sons, one of whom, Charles Francis, was left to pick up the pieces strewn by brothers John, who died an alcoholic in his early 30s, and George Washington Adams, who drank incessantly, refused to work on any regular basis, lost his brothers' money, got the maid pregnant, and jumped, or fell, to his death from the deck of a steamer en route to Washington to help his parents move back to Massachusetts after his father lost the presidency to Andrew Jackson in the election of 1828.

Some poor fathers and unfaithful husbands have certainly been disorganized and unprincipled in their professional duties, but some have been quite the reverse.

If this sounds like the extended Kennedy family, this is not a coincidence, as the combination of pressure and privilege—plus the presence of an example that may seem impossible to live up to—can have explosive results. To be fair to the children, presidents—like very successful people in any field—are rarely the best of all possible parents: They have giant-sized egos; they have other commitments; they are workaholics; they aren't often home. Sometimes their children don't seem to interest them: There is the story of one troubled son of Franklin D. Roosevelt who had to make a formal appointment to talk to his father. Once in the Oval Office when the son started talking, the president picked up a paper and started to read. Reagan and Roosevelt, who communicated intense warmth to unknown millions they never met face to face, could be remote and distant from people close to them, their children included. Does this speak well of Reagan or Roosevelt? Hardly. Did it keep them from serving successfully as president? No.

There are a number of theories that make sense on paper—and, if true, would make life easy for biographers—but in practice don't seem to bear scrutiny. President Bush, one of the few who can speak from experience, recently told a group of conservative journalists that what presidents need is the love and support of their families. But Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt got little from their wives but added pressure. In the book *The Dying President*, the author suggests that Eleanor's well-meant but incessant prodding and nagging may have shortened the president's life. What support he did get came from his old love, Lucy Rutherfurd, at that time a widow, whom his daughter Anna, sensing his loneliness, wisely helped him to visit. And if men who betray their wives will sooner or later betray their own country, then Alexander Hamilton, John Kennedy, and Martin Luther King Jr. would neither have lived nor have died as they did.

If only men who succeeded as both husbands and fathers were worthy to hold high public office, we would have lost both of the Adamses, two of three men now called our three greatest presidents (Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt), two of the three greatest presidents of the 20th century (Reagan and Franklin Roosevelt), as well as two of the four presidents (Reagan and Kennedy) who did the most to help win the Cold War.

It would be a mistake to assume, as some do, that dysfunction is therefore a sign of authenticity and humanity and to recruit the Gary Harts of the world as political leaders. Some poor fathers and unfaithful husbands have certainly been disorganized and unprincipled in their professional duties, but some have been quite the reverse. Unhappy families are not all alike, yet some have produced outstanding presidents. It would be nice to have a president with a harmonious home life, who is happy himself, and an example to others. But it's even nicer to have one who in the end wins the Cold War. And, of course, one who wins World War II. ♦

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Another Winner from Winn Parish

Bobby Jindal's race for governor of Louisiana.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

Winnfield, La.

In many ways, Bobby Jindal's appearance in a small meeting room on Main Street at the center of this rural town of 5,000 was a typical campaign event. There were "Bobby Jindal" banners on the walls and enthusiastic volunteers in yellow "Bobby Jindal" polo shirts. There were homemade baked goods and there were red-white-and-blue balloons. There was the eager campaign aide who clapped loudly at all of the candidate's applause lines in order to encourage others to do the same. And Jindal, the second-term Republican congressman running for governor again after losing narrowly four years ago, gave a rousing speech filled with lines sure to appeal to some of the most conservative voters in America.

"In Mississippi, they said: 'If you loot, we'll shoot,'" he says approvingly of that state's response to post-Katrina crime. "In Louisiana, they confiscated guns from more than 1,000 law-abiding citizens."

The members of the audience share his indignation, and he reminds them that he has won the endorsements of the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, the NRA, and the Fraternal Order of Police.

"Our most important priority has to be protecting our children. Do you know that the minimum sentence for a convicted child molester in Louisiana is one year?" Jindal says. Murmurs of disbelief come from the small crowd. "And the minimum sentence for online predators is two years?"

A leather-faced man standing near the back of the room offers an angry harrumph. He nudges the man next to him, who is wearing a shiny gold-star badge on his belt. The sheriff shakes his head: perverts.

Bobby Jindal

EARL KELENY

"They brag about the fact that you can go on the Internet and see block-by-block where these child molesters live," says Jindal, preparing the audience for the payoff of his tough-on-crime campaign—a positive reference to "The Farm," Louisiana's often-controversial state penitentiary. "It would be much better if we found out they were all living in the same place—in Angola, far away from all children."

The crowd shouts its approval. There's a vigorous "Damn right!" from the far side of the room. And Jindal continues with a monumental promise: He will end the corruption that has characterized Louisiana politics for generations. He says this standing in front of a huge mural featuring the three governors who went to Baton Rouge from Winn Parish: Huey Long, O.K. Allen, and Earl Long.

Jindal is small next to those larger-than-life figures. He is relatively short and extraordinarily thin—not surprising for someone who sometimes wakes up at 4 A.M. to exercise. If it weren't for the occasional strand of gray hair on his head, he could pass for 16 years old.

Jindal is different from those former governors in another way, too: His skin is brown. That's not an advantage in a state that gave David Duke 44 percent of its vote in 1990.

If Jindal, the son of immigrants from India, is to win the Louisiana governor's race, he will need the enthusiasm he generates at his events to translate into votes. His first opportunity to win comes this month in an open primary.

Some voters are actually casting their ballots this week, in the state's first election featuring early voting; then Louisianans will go to the polls en masse on October 20. If Jindal gets more than 50 percent of that vote, he's governor. If he doesn't, the two top vote-getters will face each other in a runoff next month. Although several recent polls have shown him with a lead large enough to give him a victory in the primary, Jindal's campaign is preparing to intensify its work through November.

That's smart. In 2003, Jindal won

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33 percent of the first-round vote and faced Democrat Kathleen Blanco (who took 18 percent) in the runoff. Although polls showed him ahead by some 11 points in the days leading up to the election, he lost 52-48 percent.

Jindal had come from nowhere to qualify for that runoff. When he started what many regarded as a quixotic campaign for governor, he was 32 and drawing 3 percent in the polls. He had an impressive résumé—he was Louisiana's secretary of health and hospitals at 24 and president of the University of Louisiana system at 28. But while Jindal's work was well known to opinion leaders in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, to voters in outlying areas he was unfamiliar and different. Says one Republican strategist, "If David Duke did well in a parish, Bobby did poorly."

In the four years since his defeat, Jindal has worked hard to change that. His election to the House of Representatives in 2004 raised his public profile, and he has spent countless Sunday mornings traveling to churches throughout rural Louisiana talking about his conversion to Catholicism.

Those trips and the familiarity they bred came in handy this summer when the Louisiana Democratic party launched an attack on Jindal and his faith. A television ad that aired in heavily Protestant northern and central Louisiana accused Jindal of intolerance toward non-Catholics in writings dating back to the mid 1980s. "He wrote articles that insulted thousands of Louisiana Protestants," said the narrator.

The backlash was swift, in part because the ad was brazenly dishonest even by the low standards of campaign attacks. Clergy from around the state spoke out in defense of Jindal, including many individuals who had hosted him at their churches and who had discussed his faith with him at some length.

There are more attacks coming. In 2003, Democrats aired an us-versus-them ad in the final days of the runoff campaign that proved decisive. The ad featured a stark warning: "Wake Up, Louisiana." As the screen showed a young, dark Bobby Jindal, the narrator intoned: "They hope we don't wake up until it's too late."

Democrats have tried to use Jindal's ethnicity against him in this race, too. The Louisiana Democratic party for months insisted on using Jindal's given name, Piyush, in its press releases. (National Democrats cried foul, and were right to do so, when Republicans tried using Barack Obama's middle name—Hussein.)

Julie Vezinot, the party's spokeswoman, insisted that it wasn't meant to draw attention to Jindal's race. "It's his real name. It is not race-baiting," she told Newhouse newspapers. "I see Bobby Jindal as presenting a façade. I think it is important to let people know who he is, . . . to say this is what he actually is rather than the image he presents to the public."

In an interview aboard his campaign bus as we traveled between par-

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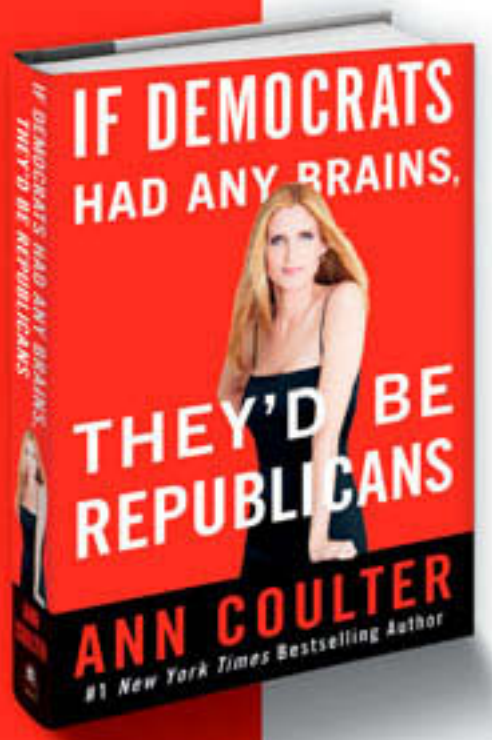

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ishes last week, I asked Jindal about race. He did not want to talk about it and says that national reporters and commentators seem to spend a lot more time on his ethnicity than Louisianans do. When I point out that those same analysts believe he underperformed in rural areas in 2003 in part because of his race, he scoffs. "I don't think race is the reason I lost," he insists. "The more familiar voters were with me, the better we did."

Which explains why he has spent four years getting acquainted with these voters. The unspoken message is simple: I'm just like you.

At a campaign stop in Ville Platte, the crowd includes lots of people wearing the purple and yellow of the LSU Tigers. "LSU is ranked number one in the country," Jindal says, in his soft Louisiana accent. "We're going to beat Florida this weekend and beat them again in Atlanta," he adds, referring to the site of the 2007 SEC championship game. It is a passing reference in a relatively unimportant part of his speech. But it reinforces the fact that despite his brown skin and his Ivy League degree and his Rhodes scholarship, Bobby Jindal is just like them. ♦

A Hint of Red for the Bluest State?

A Republican's uphill battle in Massachusetts.

BY JOHN MCCORMACK

Chelmsford, Mass.

Chowing down some fried-chicken tenders at Skip's Restaurant on Chelmsford Street, Republican congressional candidate Jim Ogonowski explains why his party lost control of Congress in 2006. "We just had more bums," he says in his Boston accent, speaking almost as quickly as he does bluntly. "People are fed up with Washington, D.C."

The scrappy but sanguine Ogonowski—a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel whose brother John was an American Airlines pilot killed in the World Trade Center attacks—is running for the 5th District seat vacated this summer by Marty Meehan when he became chancellor of the University of Massachusetts at Lowell. Ogonowski believes that voters' frustration with a "broken Congress" will propel him to victory in the October 16 special election. Yet, the odds are stacked against him: A paltry 14 percent of voters in the district are registered Republicans.

The race should have been a cakewalk for his Democratic opponent, Niki Tsongas, the widow of Massachusetts senator and 1992 presidential candidate Paul Tsongas. But Ogonowski is just 10 points behind in the latest SurveyUSA poll. Democratic leaders are scared because a single-digit margin of victory for Tsongas in true-blue Massachusetts would call into question the present wisdom that supporting General Petraeus's strategy in Iraq—as Ogonowski does—is the kiss of electoral death.

Democrats are worried enough to have dispatched Nancy Pelosi and Bill Clinton to the district on consecutive weekends to gin up enthusiasm in the local Democratic machine. (Tsongas happily welcomed Clinton, a man her late husband once called a "cynical and unprincipled politician" and "a direct threat to my children's generation.") While Clinton's star power will help get Democrats to the polls in a typically low-turnout special election, hugging Pelosi tightly may turn off independent voters—a recent Zogby poll had public approval of Congress at 11 percent.

Ogonowski opposes President Bush's policies on abortion, Social Security, gays serving in the military, and immigration, but when I ask Tsongas if there is an issue on which she disagrees with Pelosi, the typically on-script candidate tells me, "I'd have to think, um, at this point, but you know, off the top of my head at the moment, I'm very supportive of the kind of changes the Democratic Congress is bringing about for our nation."

Tsongas has embraced the antiwar left, doing nothing, for instance, to distance herself publicly from MoveOn.org's attack on General Petraeus—though she tells me that the "General Betray Us" ad went "over the line." If history is any guide, 5th District voters take issue with an elite politician linked to attacks on the troops. The last time a Republican won this congressional seat was 1972, when Paul Cronin upset John Kerry's first run for elective office. Although antiwar presidential candidate George McGovern tallied the most votes in the district, the blue-collar and pro-military voters rejected the blue-blooded Kerry who had testified to Congress in 1971 that Americans were raping and murdering Vietnamese civilians "on a day-to-day basis with the full awareness of officers at all levels of command."

Ogonowski strongly supports Petraeus and the surge, but believes that the 2002 invasion was a "mistake" and wants a complete withdrawal from Iraq as soon as there is a stable government and army. He says

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Jim Ogonowski

THOMAS FLUHARTY

that withdrawing before then would lead to "civil war, genocide, absolute chaos—and not just in Iraq, but the neighboring states as well."

Tsongas endorses a bill that calls for all the troops to be withdrawn within 270 days of its passage. Asked if pulling out all of the troops in nine months would lead to genocide, Tsongas says, "I believe a timetable puts in place those things that will help control the situation and prevent the kind of situation that you are presuming."

"The kind of situation you are presuming" is the intentionally vague Washington way of saying "genocide." This verbal tic pops up again and again when she's asked about illegal immigration, the other big issue in the race. Tsongas favors a "pathway to citizenship" and supports "strong border security," but she thinks a "virtual fence" might do the trick. What about a real fence made of steel or concrete? "I'd look at it," she says. "I'd have to be very sure that it actually was going to be effective."

Ogonowski passionately supports a border fence and opposes amnesty for illegal immigrants. He says amnesty is an affront to local voters, most of whose ancestors immigrated before the advent of the welfare state. "My great-grandmother came here in 1904, legally, with four kids—she was a widow," says Ogonowski. "[Illegal immigrants] use our hospitals, they don't pay taxes, they're a drain on our society." He walks a fine line between straight-talk and stridency, saying, "They're also killing a lot of people . . . they're involved in a lot of other crimes across this country."

Ogonowski is just as passionate of a campaigner. He's lost 40 pounds thanks to his relentless schedule of door-to-door hand-shaking and walking in parades. It's an effective strategy, but also a necessary one for a candidate who, by the October 1 filing deadline, had raised just $430,000—Tsongas had raised $1.9 million.

Can Ogonowski's dogged campaigning and unvarnished personality overcome Tsongas's name recognition and war chest in a heavily Democratic district? "No," says David King, a Harvard political science professor who focuses on Congress. "This election is all about turnout." King also thinks it's foolish to draw any national conclusions from this special election, saying, "This isn't a referendum on Bush, period. This isn't a referendum on Pelosi, period."

Nonetheless, pundits will divine some national significance in the election results, even if the race is decided by something as trivial as Ogonowski's Y chromosome: The SurveyUSA poll showed Tsongas winning the votes of women by 32 points, while Ogonowski was leading among male voters by 13 points.

Most commentators now see the close 2005 special election in a heavily Republican Ohio congressional district—in which Iraq war veteran Paul Hackett, the Democrat, lost to Republican Jean Schmidt by 3,000 votes—as a harbinger of the 2006 Republican defeat. But perhaps the right conclusion to be drawn from Hackett's close loss is that voters were not simply fed up with Bush and the Republican party, but with Washington and politicians in general. Perhaps swing voters wanted to send a hometown boy to Congress, someone who served in the military, someone who shoots straight even if he's shooting from the hip.

Someone just like Jim Ogonowski. ♦

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The Right Stuff

Conservatives decide if you can't beat Hollywood, join it. BY SONNY BUNCH

It's hard to know exactly what to expect from a film festival that caters to conservatives. Will the program consist of films made by conservative filmmakers? What even makes a movie conservative?

"Our mission, really, is to bring Hollywood back in touch with the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of the American people," says Jim Hubbard, who, along with his wife Ellen, heads the American Film Renaissance (AFR), a small outfit looking to make a big impact on the world of film. AFR has been hosting film festivals across the country since 2004, but the Hubbards hope to set up permanent shop in Washington and push the festival into the mainstream. Jim Hubbard says he wants the name recognition of a Sundance or a Cannes while maintaining the political sensibility of Middle America.

His philosophy is pretty simple. "First and foremost, you've got to entertain. You've got to be a skilled artist. And if you don't do that, you're going to hurt the side that you profess to want to help." The 2007 American Film Renaissance kicked off at Washington's E Street Cinema to a standing-room-only crowd with a short documentary on eminent domain starring Drew Carey. The main attraction, though, was a feature made by the Acton Institute, *The Call of the Entrepreneur*. The movie is essentially an hour-long infomercial for capitalism, but it fits Hubbard's prescription to a T. Shot in pristine high definition, *The Call of the Entrepreneur* was alternately funny, moving, and educational.

Acton—described to great laughs by spokeswoman Michelle Muccio before the screening as "Like Cato [the libertarian think tank], but slightly more virtuous"—made this film because it believes that business has received short shrift from Hollywood for many years. "Hollywood demonizes entrepreneurship and business ventures," Muccio told me before the show, pointing to examples like the evil Mr. Potter in *It's a Wonderful Life* and the conniving Gordon Gekko from *Wall Street*. It's not often that you see a businessman doing much good in a Hollywood film.

One of Hubbard's goals for AFR is "to give a place at the table to those groups in the country that traditionally feel alienated—at least for the last forty years anyway—have felt alienated from the entertainment industry. That's our mission, in part: to give people who feel marginalized a place at the table."

Consider *Indoctrinate U*, a documentary focused on the left-wing bias pervasive on college campuses today. Earlier this year, one of the producers complained to me about the reception the film had received from festival programmers across the country. The Hubbards offered *Indoctrinate U* top billing, and it played to a raucous sold-out audience at the Kennedy Center. The film's director, Evan Coyne Maloney, was thrilled by the enthusiastic reception. "Having spent four years working on this film, it was easy for me to forget how much of an emotional impact these stories have when you first hear them. The crowd got it; they were boisterous, enthusiastic, outraged at times and laughing hysterically at others. And to be rewarded at the end with a standing ovation made it a night I'll never forget," he said.

Sonny Bunch is assistant editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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The four-day festival wasn't limited to documentaries. One evening's program featured a short that revolved around a man whose young daughter dies because he leaves her alone in the family pool so he can engage in a homosexual affair and a feature film named *Weirdsville*. It focuses on a trio of heroin addicts who square off against a trio of Satanists while simultaneously attempting to steal a fortune from a man who has been crippled by an icicle. I enjoyed it immensely (the short a little less so), but I was confounded by their inclusion in the festival.

"We wanted to throw a curveball," said Hubbard when I asked him about that evening's programming. "We're a mainstream film festival. . . . It was a fun, entertaining film, people laughed throughout. Part of our mission is to reach out to young people, and it was definitely a heavily youth-centered audience." The audience certainly did enjoy itself. There was another, programming-related reason to throw *Weirdsville* into the mix, Hubbard said. "When you have something serious on Wednesday night dealing with business and something serious on Friday night dealing with the political climate on universities, Thursday you've got a break from serious topics and can come and laugh and attend an after party and just be entertained."

And after-parties are the key to a great film festival. It's where the people are introduced and the deals get done. "I think a festival is a festival, and it should have a festive atmosphere," Hubbard mused. "If people want to come and see a serious film and go have a cocktail afterwards and socialize and network, from a business standpoint, that's very important. People are networking, filmmakers are networking with others, and you can't really do that in a movie theater."

The American Film Renaissance aspires to more than a simple yearly gathering of right-of-center folks looking for a good time. The Hubbards are currently producing two documentaries of their own and are hoping to nurture a cadre of young talent that will enter the industry and make it more hospitable for conservatives. "Petitions, reactions, boycotts, things like that aren't the right approach," says Hubbard. "I think what you need to do is get into the marketplace of ideas and see to it that your ideas are heard. There's no talent [on the right]. You take someone like Robert Greenwald, who makes his anti-Wal Mart documentary. He has a bevy of talent at his fingertips. Editors who will work for scale who have edited major motion pictures and documentaries; he can just get on the phone and call them up, and they'll work for practically nothing."

Working for almost nothing isn't quite in the conservative mold—what would the makers of *The Call of the Entrepreneur* say?—but Hubbard's underlying point is well taken: If conservatives refuse to engage Hollywood on its own terms, they have no right to complain when a bevy of antiwar, anticorporation, and anti-Republican films are unleashed on the public. ♦

MICHAEL RAMIREZ

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Oskiwawa!

Chief Illiniwek is gone, but not forgotten.

BY ROBERT D. NOVAK

Champaign, Ill.

I was a little apprehensive as I awaited the Illinois-Penn State football game last Saturday. It would be the first time in 64 years that I attended a game in the beautiful old Memorial Stadium without Chief Illiniwek dancing at halftime. The Chief was gone, victim of the political correctness police who had been after him for 15 years. So I expected sadness, but not the unusual presentation that took place in his absence. It evoked a mixture of melancholy and joy.

I had first been thrilled by the Chief's graceful and noble dance on October 10, 1942, when I was 11 years old and had finally talked my father, an Illinois grad ('22), into taking me to Champaign for a game. Since then I had seen him perform at dozens of games (I attended all of them in 1948-1951, when I was an undergraduate at the university). But liberal activists began to lobby against him around 1990 as an insult to Native Americans. Finally, the university capitulated to unbearable pressure from the NCAA and Illinois Democratic politicians. The Chief was really gone.

But only in body, it turned out, not in spirit. I was advised to watch closely at halftime, based on what had happened three weeks earlier in the season home opener against Western Illinois. In the past, the magnificent Marching Illini band would end its halftime performance playing the school's marching songs interspersed with the Chief's war hymn. The band would form ILLINI in block letters and march down the field. Hidden until then by the ranks of the marching band members, the Chief would suddenly appear and—cheered on by 70,000—would begin the stylized dance that had started in 1926.

And now the band was going through that time-honored routine, the same music and the same marching routine—without the Chief!

The Chief, in happier days

From the capacity crowd and especially the student sections, came shouts of "Chief! Chief!" It was an eerie spectacle. Illiniwek without the Chief was a little like Hamlet without the prince. A chill went through my body, and tears came to my eyes.

How sad that the cramped little minds in the NCAA and the Illinois legislature had for no good reason ended this ritual that had run for 80 years and hurt nobody. Yet the sadness was overridden by a joyous affirmation that students and alumni alike were cheering the memory of what had been taken from them. Earlier that week I saw many students—women mostly—wearing shirts with one word on the front: CHIEF. It was a triumph of the human spirit over the dead hand of political correctness.

The creation of Illiniwek as the symbol of the university's football team was inspired by legendary Coach Bob Zuppke, who called the Chief "the full Indian man—physical, intellectual, spiritual." Not for 63 years was there any protest or allegation of racist motives. But once encouraged, the anti-Chief campaign expanded and proliferated. The NCAA branded Chief Illiniwek one of the "hostile and abusive racial/ethnic national origin mascots."

Like Illinois, colleges all over America adopted Indian nicknames, symbols, and mascots for their football teams—not to mock the country's defeated native population but to inspire warrior-like fierceness on the gridiron. Many colleges—such as Stanford ("Indians") and Miami of Ohio ("Redskins")—quickly abandoned their old banners. Florida State stubbornly remained the Seminoles with Chief Osceola as their symbol, earning a pass from the NCAA thanks to approval from the Seminole tribe, which received scholarship aid from the university. Illinois refused at first to abandon its tradition but was unable to copy Florida State's escape route by subsidizing the Illini tribe. The real Illini are extinct, most of them wiped out in the 1760s by inter-tribal warfare.

The University of Illinois resisted the NCAA for years, enduring actual sanctions. But the threat to the school's purse strings by hostile Democratic state legislators brought university administrators to their knees. The NCAA has relented in its earlier demand that the nickname Illini also be discarded, but liberal activists protest that as well as the "Illiniwek without the Chief" halftime exercise.

As I watched the Marching Illini's hollow presentation, I fantasized that this shell of a ritual would be retained and some day in some way, the tyrants of political correctness would lose their power. Or will memory fail first, and even what little is left of the ritual disappear? ♦

Robert D. Novak is a syndicated columnist and author of a memoir, The Prince of Darkness: 50 Years Reporting in Washington.

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After Fidel

With Castro fading fast, it's time to rethink U.S. policy toward the Cuban regime and give hope to a beleaguered people.

By Mario Loyola

Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutiérrez, who fled the Cuban Revolution at the age of six in 1960, is the Bush administration's point man on Cuba policy. He is often asked whether the U.S. embargo is working. "My answer is an emphatic yes," he recently explained. "The embargo has denied Castro resources." Maybe so. But it has also supplied the Castro regime with two things it vitally needs: isolation and a foreign enemy who is not a real threat.

ED QUINN / CORBIS

For decades the United States has maintained a policy of complete ostracism of Cuba—no travel, no trade, no remittances, no diplomatic relations. This has not cut the Castro regime off from resources: Cuba receives as much aid from Venezuela's Hugo Chávez as Israel gets from the United States. The policy has accomplished little except to protect the Castro regime from the outside influences that proved fatal to communism in Europe. And it is increasingly poisonous to the interests of the United States.

President Bush gave a clue to why this policy survives in his 2007 State of the Union speech when he said, "We will continue to speak out for the cause of freedom in places like Cuba, Belarus, and Burma." Miami representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen gave the president a beaming thumbs-up, not stopping to think that what defines these three countries as a group is not the repressiveness of their governments (he could then have mentioned China or Saudi Arabia) but rather their strategic irrelevance.

Mario Loyola is a fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

Few Americans are old enough to remember that Cuba was once modern and vibrant, a powerhouse of cultural influence. Modernity was the reason for the revolution. Castro's initial base of support was among the urban middle class—university students, professionals, and small-business owners who wanted democracy. What they got was a cataclysm.

WASHINGTON REACTS TO CASTRO

The current U.S. policy towards Cuba was born in the elections of 1960. Castro had been in power nearly two years. Reports of kangaroo courts and summary executions carried live on television horrified the American public, while Castro's fratricidal consolidation of power—along with sweeping seizures of foreign-owned property and military support from the Soviet Union—awoke Washington to a near menace.

In October, John F. Kennedy, the Democratic nominee for president, accused the Eisenhower administration (and by implication his opponent, Vice President Richard Nixon) of permitting the creation of "Communism's first Caribbean base" and allowing Castro to arm himself to the teeth with Soviet weapons. Nixon convinced Eisenhower to react sharply, and, on October 19, the president imposed an embargo on all trade with Cuba. With an indifference that would become characteristic of Washington's attitude, the secretary of commerce, Frederick Henry Mueller, remarked, "If it pushes them into trade with the Communist bloc, that's just too bad." In January, Washington broke off diplomatic relations.

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Baseball is not just the Cuban national game, but a national obsession. At left, a young boy riding with his glove in downtown Havana. Above, a boy pitches a rubber ball during a pick-up game. Boys will play in the streets with anything to hand as equipment.

JUAN CARLOS ULATE / REUTERS / CORBIS

In the months that followed, Castro dramatically increased the seizure of private property and criminalized the free press. When the archbishop of Santiago publicly protested, Castro turned on the church and confiscated all property held by religious organizations. For my grandfather, a pharmacist in the eastern seaside town of Manzanillo who had delivered medicines to Castro's guerrillas in the Sierra Maestra mountains, this was the final straw. Along with hundreds of thousands of his countrymen, he and his family fled to the United States. Betrayed by their former hero, these Cubans would hate Castro with an enduring passion. They would remain implacably opposed to any relaxation of the U.S. embargo.

After the Bay of Pigs invasion failed in 1961, Castro slammed the door shut on the exodus. The transformation of Cuba into a prison was now complete, with two sets of walls—one erected by Castro to keep everyone in and the other erected by Washington to keep everyone and everything out. Cuba's people began their lonely journey into the endless calamities of Castro's dictatorship.

WHAT CASTRO WROUGHT

Cuba would now be shaped by Castro's personal—and often sadistic—caprices. When the guerilla leader Huber Matos, the *comandante* of Camagüey province, attacked the drift towards communism in 1959, Castro sent Matos's best friend to arrest him. (Convicted of treason, Matos

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The staff of a restaurant in Havana. American culture remains a strong influence despite the embargo.

ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS / POLARIS

spent 20 years in jail.) Castro had no patience for dissent and was always willing to contradict the consensus of his advisers, just to show them that he was in charge. That same summer, a revolutionary tribunal in Santiago acquitted 57 air force officers of the former regime. Castro traveled to the province and personally reversed the verdict, arguing that technicalities could not get in the way of the "revolutionary conscience." The officers were executed en masse by machine gun.

In his 1992 memoir *Before Night Falls*, a horrifying and brilliant chronicle of the Cuban Revolution's first two decades, Reinaldo Arenas recalls that by 1961 basic foodstuffs had disappeared from the markets. Cubans would travel to the new collective farms "begging to buy eggs and chicken; some offered to pay any price for a chicken, but they were denied because a farm 'of the people' couldn't sell to individuals." In 1959, Cuba's per capita GDP was among the highest in Latin America. Just ten years later, Castro's ruinous policies—incompetent even by Communist standards—had made Cuba one of the poorest countries in the world.

Castro's solution was more dictatorship. As Walter Lippmann observed in *The Good Society* (1937), the organizing principle of a Marxist society is not Marxism but militarism. In 1965 Castro launched a plan to increase the sugar harvest to 10 million tons of sugarcane in 1970. Arenas was among the hundreds of thousands of Cubans driven into the field to work the harvest.

> The farm was, in reality, an immense military unit. All those who participated in cutting the sugarcane were young recruits who had to work there obligatorily. To enter one of those places was to enter the last circle of hell. … I had seen trials in which young men were condemned to twenty and thirty years in prison for the mere fact that on the weekend, they had gone to visit their families, their mothers, their girlfriends.

The effort proved unsustainable. Sugar production began to decline and never stopped. Today, sunk by the fall of the Soviet Union, food production in Cuba is less than half of what it was in 1959, and the sugar harvest is less than a tenth of what it was then. The economy no longer produces much of anything. Forced labor has been replaced by involuntary indolence. And escape is all but impossible.

Many Cubans are currently serving long prison sentences—generally between 20 and 30 years, often without beds or medical attention—convicted of nothing more than attempting "to exit the national territory illegally." Many were also charged with piracy: By law there is no such thing as a private boat in Cuba, so trying to get across the Florida Straits—even if it's in your own fishing boat—is by the government's definition an act of piracy. And if someone should try to escape punishment by claiming to have been an unwilling passenger on your boat, you would be charged with terrorism, a capital offense.

In April 2003, dissidents seized a local ferry and headed north towards the coast of Florida. They ran

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out of fuel on the high seas, and Cuban forces brought the ferry back. The dissidents were tried for "terrorism, piracy, and attempt to illegally exit the national territory" in a proceeding that lasted just a few hours. They were executed within days. These horrors are the stuff of daily life in Cuba. As Arenas noted, in a totalitarian society, "Calamities are endless."

CONGRESSIONAL STRAITJACKET

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the U.S. government moved to liberalize its Cuba policy. The Clinton administration relaxed some aspects of the embargo and made it easier to travel there. Republicans in Congress fought these moves tooth-and-nail, drafting the Helms-Burton Act to codify the policy of ostracism. Clinton refused to sign it. But, when a pair of American Cessnas were shot down by the Cuban air force in 1996, he reversed course.

Helms-Burton forbids any dealings with Cuba until the regime meets a lengthy wish list of conditions and until both Fidel Castro and his brother Raúl are out of power. The regime has to commit suicide or be overthrown before the United States will deign to have any contact with it. It is the negotiating posture of somebody who has no interest in negotiating.

> By law there is no such thing as a private boat in Cuba, so trying to get across the Florida Straits—even if it's in your own fishing boat—is by the government's definition an act of piracy.

If the administration were really aiming to end communism in Cuba, it would look to the policies that worked against communism elsewhere. During the Cold War, we had diplomatic relations with every country in the Warsaw Pact. We started extending large loans to the Soviet Union in the 1970s and made trade a cornerstone of China policy from the moment of Nixon's opening. One problem facing the Polish Communist regime in the 1980s was the fact that they owed the West $40 billion and were in desperate need of debt relief.

Worse still, just as American officials knew in 1960 that the embargo would push Cuba further into the Soviet bloc, they are well aware that the present policy is pushing Cuba into the arms of Venezuela and Iran—more unwillingly.

THE EXILES

In the exile community, opposition to Castro was for decades absolute and nonnegotiable. Exiles urging dialogue were silenced through intimidation and terrorism. In Miami, bombings and other violent acts against foreign consulates, travel agencies, and radio stations were dishearteningly routine.

For the Cubans who left during the revolution, the island had simply ceased to exist. Growing up, I knew Cuba only in stories and old pictures. But that has changed. For those Cubans who have arrived in the United States in the last quarter-century, who actually had to live under the Castro regime, Cuba remains very much present, and such exiles are now in the majority in America. The 1980 Mariel boatlift brought 140,000 Cubans to Miami, and another 300,000 have followed under a visa program negotiated by the Clinton administration to try to alleviate the refugee crisis.

These exiles know that the problems of Cuba go far beyond Castro. Laritza Diversent, a dissident writing from Havana, recently lamented the "prostitution, delinquency, and corruption that have become indispensable means of subsistence." For the new exiles, Cuba's nightmarish privations weigh more than politics; less than half of them support the embargo. Even among exiles who arrived in the early years of the revolution, there is growing frustration with a policy that has never produced any tangible benefit. Carlos Saladrigas, who escaped Cuba in 1961 and is one of the exile community's most successful businessmen, formed the Cuba Study Group in 2000 to examine policy alternatives.

Saladrigas focuses on the fact that dictatorships need legitimacy. "The Communist regime in Cuba," he explains, "has been able to get legitimacy from two sources: the conflict with the United States and the charisma of Fidel." The United States can eliminate the first one whenever it wants, and the second will soon eliminate itself. Saladrigas notes that Raúl Castro is in a much weaker position than his brother and will have to base his legitimacy on actual results. That will force him towards reform. And, as Lech Walesa likes to point out, the Communist system is unreformable.

ROOTS OF HOPE

Fidel Castro, the immovable ideological core of the Cuban Revolution, is gone from power and will never come back—in a recent interview released by Cuban state television, Castro showed difficulty completing simple sentences. His brother is far less ideological and

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A taxi stand in Havana: Pre-revolution American cars are still in use in Cuba.

MATT CARDY / GETTY IMAGES

never contradicts the consensus of his advisers. Meanwhile, behind the aging oligarchs of the Sierra Maestra generation, there is an entire state full of bureaucrats who know that they will live to see the fall of communism in Cuba and have to think about what happens next. Among them are future allies of the United States.

In an echo of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, two words have crept into official propaganda in the last year: "change" and "dialogue." The word "change" has become common on T-shirts and in windows across Cuba, and the regime has reportedly launched a wide-ranging and historic "internal dialogue" on all issues. For the regime to admit that people want change and the freedom to talk about it, necessarily empowers public opinion as a force in opposition to party ideology. This is the process that destroyed the Communist political monopoly in Eastern Europe and in no case did it follow the rigid prescriptions of Helms-Burton.

The all-or-nothing approach of U.S. policy is increasing the risk that the transition, when it comes, will be violent. That terrifies Cuba's dissidents—and poses grave risks for the United States. Instability could further radicalize the regime and open more opportunities for Venezuela and Iran. It could lead to another refugee crisis. Most ominously, Cuba could become a failing state, overrun by armed gangs with ties to drug trafficking and international terrorism, as in much of Central America.

The U.S. government should be negotiating for incremental transition, because even the smallest reforms will fuel popular expectations for more change. In 1992, Carlos Lage, then finance minister and now vice president, spent many months in Europe putting together a package of reforms aimed at encouraging small business. Castro balked on ideological grounds (he could not live with the thought that someone in Cuba might make a profit), but now that he is effectively out of power, Lage is likely to want to try again. The United States can help him: allowing Cuba access to microfinancing (even if that also gives the regime access to more resources) and letting American firms import products manufactured by privately owned businesses there.

The United States should encourage the Cuban regime to talk to dissident leaders such as Osvaldo Payá—but we should listen to them, too. Every major dissident group in Cuba has called for the United States to lift the restrictions on travel and remittances for Cuban exiles. That alone could reduce the terrible isolation in which Cuba's dissidents are now struggling.

Making the exile community a bridge to Cuba would also allow U.S. policy to profit from the work that Carlos Saladrigas and others have done to build consensus for change among Cubans and to prepare for the end of communism—and of exile. With its "Pillars" declaration, Cuban Consensus—an umbrella organization of dissident and exile groups including the once hardline Cuban American National Foundation—has created a framework of reconciliation for the post-Castro era. Student groups in the United States, such as Roots of Hope, are already nourishing contacts with Cuba's largely dissident youth.

Castro so thoroughly ruined Cuba as to make it irrelevant. That irrelevance—and the tragic inertia it has injected into U.S. policy—now protect the regime he is leaving behind. Meanwhile, Cubans continue to suffer silently, knowing that sooner or later something has to change. ♦

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Putting Golf Back on Course

Another hideous design trend of the 20th century bites the dust

By Dean Barnett

Holyoke, Colo.

Golf is supposed to be fun. Seriously. This may be news to a general public weaned on *Caddyshack*, which led them to think most golfers play the game solely to berate their country club's staff and avail themselves of networking opportunities. But they've got the wrong impression—golf is supposed to be fun.

For people who love golf and consider it fun, everything starts with the Old Course at St. Andrews. Golfers have been playing and enjoying the game there for over 500 years. Ben Crenshaw, one of golf's finest practicing architects, has written, "Every course worth playing retains some small element or spirit of the Old Course at St. Andrews. She is the original."

The Old Course at St. Andrews, Scotland

TONY ROBERTS / CORBIS

Tom Doak, the 46-year-old erstwhile golf outsider crowned golf's "It Architect" by *Sports Illustrated* this summer, caddied at St. Andrews after college. During his two months at the Old Course, Doak "looped" for both scratch golfers and a couple of novices who had never played 18 holes before teeing it up at St. Andrews. Doak noticed that the course allowed every player, regardless of ability, to design his own way around the course. In effect, each player got to serve as his own architect. And everyone had fun.

Golf architecture in America had a golden age in the first 30 years of the 20th century. Masters like Donald Ross, Alistair MacKenzie, A.W. Tillinghast, and Seth Raynor designed and built courses across the country (and indeed around the world) that like St. Andrews stirred the golfer's soul and were fun to play.

But there followed several decades of golf architecture dreck. Architects like Robert Trent Jones and his regrettably prolific scions dotted the American landscape with courses that were difficult and unpleasant to play—largely because they deviated from the tradition born in St. Andrews. Instead of letting each player figure out his own route from hole to hole, they funnelled all into a single narrow path.

Rees Jones, Robert Trent Jones's son, is still one of golf's most prominent architects. He describes his theory of golf architecture as follows: "My style emphasizes definition. I work hard at giving the golfer a concept as he stands over the ball. I want him to see the intended target and be able to visualize the shot." What Rees Jones omits from his reckoning is that some golfers, indeed most golfers, may be incapable of pulling off the shot that he compels them to see. Golfers have enjoyed finding their own way around St. Andrews for over 500 years. Speaking on behalf of the modern golf architecture establishment, Rees Jones in essence insists that he has discovered a better way: He will officiously preside over each and every golfer's each and every shot.

Jones family members haven't been the only architects guilty of committing affronts to golf history and ignoring the imperative that the game be fun. Perhaps the most serious offender has been Jack Nicklaus, arguably the greatest golfer ever. Nicklaus has had a hand in designing 207 courses. While some of his courses are picturesque, few are fun unless you're able to play golf as well as Jack Nicklaus. On many of his courses, the average player will lose half a

Dean Barnett is a staff writer at The Weekly Standard.

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The fourth hole at Ballyneal, Holyoke, Colo.

BALLYNEAL / SUSAN G. DRINKER & DICK DURRANCE II

dozen balls a round, many of them having found a watery grave in one of the man-made water-hazards of which Nicklaus is so fond. As a player, Nicklaus probably wouldn't even notice many of the water hazards that litter his courses. But the typical golfer does.

Worse still, Nicklaus the architect has often violated the most fundamental precept of golf course design: Put a golf course where nature intended there to be one. Let the shape of the land dictate the shape of the course. People began playing golf at St. Andrews because the terrain cried out for it. Five hundred years ago, eager proto-golfers had limited ability to alter what nature had done. The tools of the game were adapted to the challenges of the terrain.

Modern golf architects can move copious amounts of earth, and they've often abused this ability to create uninspiring golf courses on land better suited for strip malls. Some Nicklaus courses are jammed into almost ludicrously inhospitable spots. One can stand on many a Nicklaus-designed tee box thinking, "Start it at the Home Depot, and fade it to the Best Buy."

In the 10 years of Tiger Woods's ascendancy in golf, millions more Americans have watched the game on TV than ever did before. And yet the number of people playing golf has hardly moved. This is largely because golf architects have blighted the country with courses that make playing the most enjoyable game yet conjured by man about as much fun as sticking a tee in your eye. It's said that the only two things men enjoy while being bad at them are golf and sex. Mid-to-late-20th-century golf architects seemed perversely determined to make the typical golf round so miserable that the mediocre golfer would choose clumsy love-making as his only hobby.

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Happily, a golf architecture renaissance began in 1994. That's the year Sand Hills Golf Club opened for business.

When Sand Hills opened, it created a stir in the golf world. Nebraska's Sand Hills were perfectly geared for a golf course. Architects Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw hardly had to move any land to create the course. In addition to building what golfers instantly hailed as a classic, Coore & Crenshaw did it cheap.

Coore & Crenshaw's masterpiece ushered in a new era in golf architecture that aficionados characterize with one word: minimalist. The guiding principle is deference to the land. Minimalism holds that a golf course developer should look for land that is ideal for a course, and the architects they hire should let the characteristics of the land dictate the nature of the course.

Sand Hills wasn't only a proudly contrarian architectural statement; Sand Hills was also an audacious business undertaking. The Nebraska county that hosts Sand Hills is bigger than Connecticut and Rhode Island combined and has a population of less than 1,000. Getting to Sand Hills is a chore—it is quite literally in one of America's remotest spots. The nearest outpost of civilization is Mullen, Nebraska, a town of 600 roughly 15 miles away. The closest major city is Denver, over 350 miles to the southwest.

Nevertheless, Sand Hills began a revolution. Right from its opening, golf enthusiasts properly hailed it as a work of genius. Perhaps more important, Sand Hills instantly became a viable financial enterprise. Eager golfers happily made the trek to the proverbial middle of nowhere to tee it up at Sand Hills. Intended as a private club, Sand Hills quickly filled its membership.

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Sand Hills also established a new paradigm for destination golf courses. Even though its location is almost unimaginably bare for a vacation spot, Sand Hills deliberately offers almost nothing but golf. There is no spa. A masseuse is not on call. The place is without high-speed (or low-speed) Internet access. Cell phone use isn't allowed on the property, and if it were you couldn't get a signal. Sand Hills does have terrific food, complemented by a wonderful wine list. (Make sure to try the Grgich Hills Cabernet.) But there is little to do there besides eat, drink, and golf.

All of which makes it nirvana for the passionate golfer. You'd have better luck beating Tiger Woods in a $100 Nassau than finding a golfer who's visited Sand Hills and doesn't cherish the memories.

Sand Hills deliberately offers almost nothing but golf. There is no spa. A masseuse is not on call. The place is without high-speed (or low-speed) Internet access. Cell phone use isn't allowed on the property, and if it were you couldn't get a signal.

The large ripple that Sand Hills sent out across the golf world finally broke on the windswept coast of Oregon. There, near the tiny town of Bandon, golf course developer and greeting card magnate Mike Keiser discovered land that could accommodate golf courses reminiscent of the world's most beloved oceanside "links" courses in Scotland. What would become the wildly popular golf resort of Bandon Dunes had it all: rolling terrain, Pacific cliffs with stunning views, bone-chilling winds, and, last, tons of gorse—the viciously prickly bush that grows like a weed along Scotland's revered links and irretrievably swallows up errant golf balls.

The only thing Bandon Dunes lacked was accessibility. Bandon is nearly as tough to get to as Sand Hills. And it offers few other wrinkles for the normally pampered golf traveler. As at Sand Hills, there is little to do at Bandon besides eat, drink, and golf. And Bandon has a "walking only" policy. Unless you have a government-recognized disability, you will walk Bandon's courses or you won't play them.

And yet Bandon has thrived. Since opening in 1999, Bandon has used "Golf as it was meant to be" as its slogan and manifesto. The golf world has rallied around both the resort and its philosophy. In less than a decade of existence, Bandon Dunes has become the preferred resort of America's golfing cognoscenti, eclipsing such mainstays as California's renowned Pebble Beach.

If you visit Bandon Dunes, early in the evening you'll see a pub full of golfers with wind-burned faces happily downing beers and huge slabs of Bandon's famous meatloaf. Many of them have spent the past 10 hours walking 36 holes. Few of them are expert golfers. And yet they have all had fun, because the courses at Bandon allowed them to. Many of Bandon's visitors are experiencing "golf as it was meant to be" for the first time, and they look like they'll need the smiles surgically pried from their faces before they return to their workaday lives.

While the Bandon Dunes Golf Resort has three magnificent courses, the acknowledged gem is Pacific Dunes, designed by Tom Doak and opened in 2001. On *Golf Magazine*'s list of the 100 best courses in America, Sand Hills ranks eighth and Pacific Dunes ranks ninth. They are the only courses in the top 20 that are younger than 70 years old.

Tom Doak graduated from Cornell in 1982, already intent on becoming a golf course architect. He began his career as an iconoclast, more known for his writing than his course design. While still young and impolitic, Doak wrote books and articles that gleefully savaged the efforts of many of the era's leading architects. He resented and rightly condemned the way those architects used their modern construction tools to create artificial environments where the typical golf round became an ordeal rather than a pleasure.

Although Doak had been producing stirring courses for over a decade before Pacific Dunes stunned the golf world, it was Pacific Dunes that made his reputation. It transformed the one-time outsider into one of golf's most sought-after architects. But Doak wasn't about to rest on his laurels. Shortly after Pacific Dunes debuted, Tom Doak journeyed to remote Holyoke, Colorado, where he would create what is perhaps the fullest expression yet of golf as it was meant to be.

The town of Holyoke sits in the northeast corner of Colorado, roughly 15 miles from the Nebraska border. The topography is flat, perfect for farming. In the center of Holyoke swings the town's sole traffic light, ensuring that the roughly 2,300 locals and visitors passing through town govern their automobiles appropriately.

The Ballyneal Golf and Hunt Club of Holyoke opened for business in July 2006 and has already won the highest accolades. While several publications release rankings of the top courses in America and the world, *Golf Magazine*'s rankings are the industry's gold standard. In its first year

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of operation, Ballyneal debuted as the 46th best course in America and the 83rd best in the world. Ballyneal is the youngest course on either list.

Impressive as those numbers are, they're deceptively low. Ballyneal had been open for only a few months of play when the 2007 rankings were due. Therefore, relatively few of *Golf Magazine*'s panelists had had the chance to play and rate the course. In other words, the legend of Ballyneal has only just begun.

The story of how one of the world's greatest golf courses wound up in rural Colorado begins with a fit, youthful, and almost preternaturally energetic 47-year-old lifetime resident of Holyoke named Rupert O'Neal. As a boy, O'Neal and his younger brother Jim used to hit golf balls in an area of dunes known locally as the Chop Hills— a few thousand acres of dramatically rolling terrain that interrupts the hundreds of miles of surrounding flatness. Even though there was no golf course there, the O'Neal brothers "played golf" in the Chop Hills using the contours of the land and their own vivid imaginations.

Both O'Neals eventually went to college, but from there they followed different paths. While Rupert returned to Holyoke to tend the family's 3,000 acre farm, the Chop Hills had given Jim an affection for golf that he couldn't ignore. Jim became a golf professional, and today is the head pro of one of the San Francisco area's top country clubs.

Over the years, the O'Neal brothers used to talk about the Chop Hills as the perfect setting for a golf course. Both remembered the fun of playing their homemade version of the game. Long after Rupert had put away his clubs, the discussions continued, always purely theoretical. The thought of actually putting a golf course in a locale that golf snobs would undoubtedly dismiss out of hand seemed unrealistic. But that changed with the success of Sand Hills and Bandon Dunes.

The O'Neals were smart. They brought Tom Doak into the project right after he finished Pacific Dunes. Had they waited, Doak's services would have been beyond their budget. But in 2002, the stars aligned.

When he visited Holyoke, Doak saw that the O'Neal brothers were right: The Chop Hills were indeed a perfect place for a golf course. That fact shouldn't diminish Doak's accomplishment in creating one of the world's finest golf courses there. It's not as easy as Doak and Coore & Crenshaw make it look. After the success of the Sand Hills Golf Club, Jack Nicklaus attempted a "minimalist" golf course not far away on terrain almost identical to Coore & Crenshaw's. *Golf Magazine*'s 2007 rankings ignored the Nicklaus-designed course. The magnificent courses that Doak and Coore & Crenshaw have turned out in recent years are the product of long study, but also of aesthetic sensibilities that future golf architects will surely analyze for centuries.

Whenever Rupert O'Neal speaks about Ballyneal Golf and Hunt Club, he does so with evident and justified enthusiasm. In addition to helping create one of the golf world's most special places, O'Neal helped give his home town what is already Holyoke's largest non-agricultural employer.

In many ways, O'Neal has stood on the shoulders of the men who produced Sand Hills and Bandon Dunes, refining their visions to suit his own sensibilities. Like Bandon Dunes, Ballyneal is walking only; that policy should ensure a membership that's serious about its golf, rather than a group of dilettantes eager to crow about belonging to one of the world's best golf courses. Yet Ballyneal supplements its magnificent golf course with supremely comfortable accommodations where you get not only a strong cell phone signal but also wireless high speed Internet and high definition television.

O'Neal clearly doesn't welcome any kind of snobbery at Ballyneal. He is often to be seen dashing about his property in flip-flops, sipping a glass of homemade chocolate milk. O'Neal is looking for members who want to have fun, and who have fun playing golf. To make sure Ballyneal develops the right kind of membership, O'Neal personally plays at least nine holes with every potential member. Open now a little over a year, Ballyneal is still filling out its membership rolls, a fact that avid golfers will want to note.

There remains the pressing question of what long-term impact places like Sand Hills, Bandon Dunes, and Ballyneal will have on golf architecture and the game itself. The early attempts at golf-course design by Jack Nicklaus's successor as king of golf, Tiger Woods, may offer a clue.

For his first project, announced in 2006, Woods took a commission to build a course on a piece of flat desert in Dubai. It was a move right out of the Nicklaus school: Put a golf course where nature didn't intend there to be one, substituting one man's limited imagination for nature's infinite variety. The "Tiger Woods, Dubai," its website says, "will feature 20 palaces, 75 mansions and 190 luxury villas that offer the perfect blend of exclusivity and luxurious community living"—about as far as conceivable from the austere fun to be had at a place like Sand Hills.

For his second commission, Woods undertook to build a golf course on a piece of rolling terrain outside of Asheville called the Carolina Preserve. When the project was announced a few months back, Woods insisted that the land is perfect for golf, and that no man-made lakes or waterfalls will blight his first American design. The course will be walking only.

So has Tiger undergone a conversion? Only the finished product will tell. But this much we know: When someone asked him to describe his design philosophy, Tiger Woods used the magic word: "I'm more of a minimalist," he said.♦

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Hopper's World

Solitude, light, and harbingers of death.

By Martha Bayles

Painter of Light. Over the centuries this phrase has been applied to many artists, from Pontormo to Monet, Fra Angelico to Turner. (It has even been copyrighted by Thomas Kinkade, Purveyor of Kitsch.) But at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts this summer, the only Painter of Light who mattered was Edward Hopper. This exhibition will doubtless be a hit at the National Gallery in Washington and the Art Institute of Chicago; but it was in Boston that Hopper's stunning watercolors and oils of sun-washed Victorian mansions, seaside cottages, and lighthouses in Gloucester, Cape Cod, and Maine seemed most at home.

Martha Bayles teaches in the honors program at Boston College.

I didn't take a poll, but I'd bet an Essex fried clam dinner that the majority of mellow, sunburnt patrons crowding into the MFA gift shop were hoping to find a Hopper reproduction that, along with being Great Art, would remind them of a picturesque spot they visited on their summer vacation. At the same time, though, no sensible observer of this exhibition could think of Edward Hopper as Edward Happy. Even his loveliest New England watercolors have an eerie, ineffable emotional tone that, for lack of a better word, we call "Hopperesque."

It took a while for Hopper to become Hopperesque. Like many of his American peers, he made a youthful pilgrimage to France, between 1906 and 1910, studying Cézanne, Degas, Manet, Matisse, Monet, and the Impressionists. The

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Early Sunday Morning *(1930)*

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

experience was so daunting, reports the catalogue, his "career floundered for a decade . . . while he painted lukewarm renditions of Parisian themes." But he persisted, and in the 1920s gained traction with his New England watercolors, which follow the Impressionists in capturing the play of light in the moment, as opposed to the steady, stagy—some would say Olympian—illumination of French academic painting.

Edward Hopper
National Gallery of Art
(Until January 21, 2008)
Art Institute of Chicago
(February 16-May 11, 2008)

In 19th-century America the masters of this spontaneous style were Winslow Homer and John Singer Sargent. Yet there is a big difference between Hopper's watercolors and theirs: Hopper's contain no people. This is odd, given the artist's fondness for buildings and other places of human habitation and activity. He painted not only grand houses (*Haskell's House*, 1924) but also ordinary ones (*Anderson's House* and *House by 'Squam River, Gloucester*, 1926) and unlovely vistas on the working end of town (*Box Factory, Gloucester*, and *Freight Cars, Gloucester*, 1928).

In Maine he focused on lighthouses which, curiously, were not considered worthy subjects of art at the time: One contemporary critic included them on a list of "buildings which ordinarily seem to be of the ugliest varieties." Hopper made lighthouses beautiful, and the calendar

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Office at Night *(1940)*

WALKER ART CENTER

industry will be eternally grateful. But with one exception (*Pemaquid Light*, 1929), none of his New England paintings contains a human figure.

It's easy to miss this rather striking fact, because the exhibition opens with a self-portrait, painted between 1935 and 1940, that puts a vivid human face on both the artist and his work. And scattered throughout the exhibition are a number of drawings, done in the fluid pen-and-ink style Hopper acquired as a commercial illustrator, that display skill if not genius in rendering human figures walking, working, even sailing a boat. But already we can detect a certain avoidance of human expression. While their postures are natural and not forced, neither the clump of men in *Pemaquid Light* nor the people in the drawings have visible faces. Indeed, the only closely rendered, fully expressive face in the entire exhibition is that initial self-portrait, the product of five years' work.

This is not to deny the presence of people in Hopper's mature oils. His masterpiece, *Nighthawks* (1942), places four figures at its powerfully illuminated center: a red-headed woman and three men, patrons and counterman in a late-night city diner. But compared with Homer and Sargent, to say nothing of those French artists who intimidated Hopper in his youth, these figures are impossible to read. What are they thinking? What are they feeling? For heaven's sake, what are they *doing*? The questions pile up in works such as *Room in New York* (1932), *Cape Cod Evening* (1939), and *Office at Night* (1940), whose male and female subjects appear immobilized, their bodies encased in a chrysalis of brush strokes and their features congealed into masks.

This immobility doesn't always work. Consider *Ground Swell* (1939), a sailing picture popular with undiscerning tourists but really quite weird. Compared with sailing scenes by Homer, this one gives us an ocean with all the vivacity of a blue carpet draped over three logs, an effect made worse by the bell buoy and sailboat, which seem to have tipped over after having been balanced on top of the logs. As for the sailors, they are little more than marionettes arranged in a tableau.

Hopper was wise to stay away from nautical subjects, because in that realm, immobility seems not uncanny but incompetent. Only on dry land do frozen postures and lack of interaction pack an emotional wallop, as in the old myths about people being turned to stone.

It is tempting to define Hopperesque in social-political terms, because while he eschewed the skyscraper (the urban motif most beloved of modernists), he painted other up-to-date subjects, such as automats, diners, movie theaters, and gas stations. But social-political interpretations of Hopper tend not to stick. One early critic touted him as "the most inherently Anglo-Saxon painter of all time." Hopper briefly embraced this role as racial hero because it boosted his reputation with a cultural establishment still inclined, in the 1920s, to denounce modernist art as effete, alien, and downright un-American. This posture lost most of its appeal in the 1930s, when Stalin and Hitler began to persecute and murder modernists in the name of the New Communist Man and the German *Volk*, respectively.

So did Hopper side with modernism? Not in any simple way. Like all great painters, he was a master at manipulating the purely formal elements of color, line, shape, and pictorial space. He was also an abstractionist in the sense of heightening (abstracting) certain elements to suit his expressive purposes. But Hopper shared the public's dislike of the radically nonrepresentational art that emerged in the early 20th century, whether the ideologically driven geometric art of Malevich or the otherworldly hieroglyphics of Kandinsky. Nonrepresentational art was devoted to capturing the invisible dimension of human experience, but for Hopper that made little sense.

He was a man of few words. As one friend recalled, "He spoke in a flat monotone that falls across the conversation like a roadblock which had to be removed before fur-

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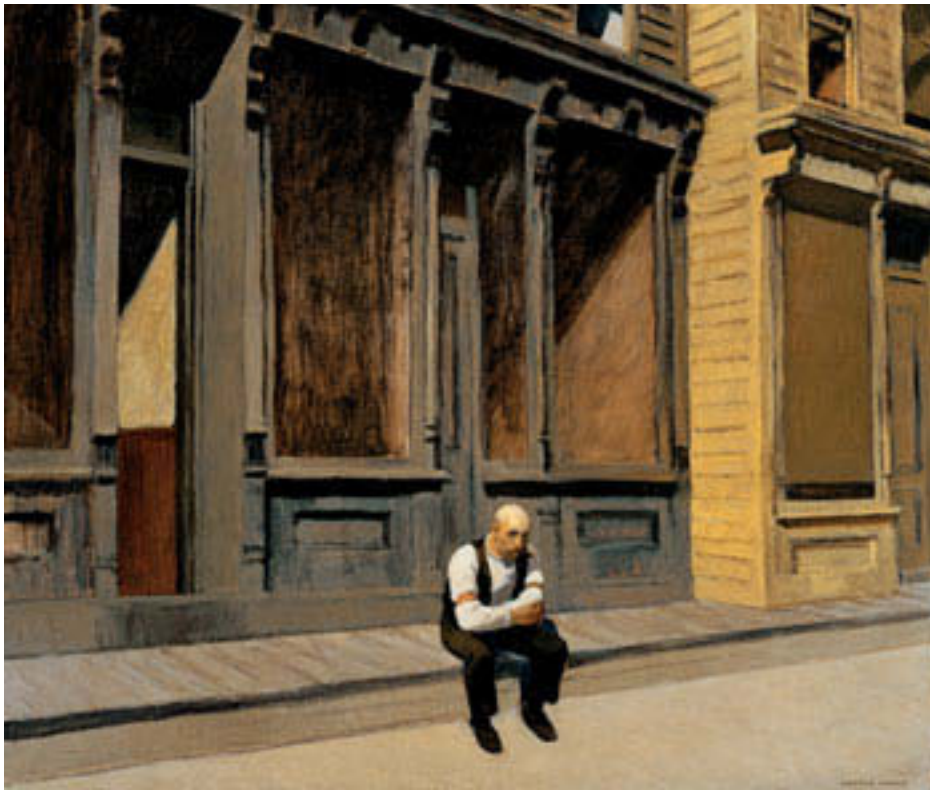
ther progress could be made." But Hopper waxed eloquent on the importance of recognizable images in visual art, writing in 1928: "The inner life of a human being is a vast and varied realm, and does not concern itself alone with stimulating arrangements of color, form, and design."

Thus did Hopper wind his way through the artistic landscape of the 20th century, sidestepping most of the ideological land mines and insisting on the uniqueness of his vision. But he was no "outsider artist," oblivious to the sophisticated culture of his time. He learned much from the modernists, especially the surrealists. From de Chirico he took the deserted cityscape divided between brilliant light and profound shadow. From Magritte he took the strangely altered ordinary scene. Consider the odd, disproportionately small scale of the figures in *Sunday* (1926) and *Gas* (1940), or, in *Rooms by the Sea* (1951), the unnerving sight of a door opening directly onto mid-ocean.



Sunday *(1926)*

THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION

But Hopper's deepest achievement goes beyond surrealism. Co-curator Carol Troyen writes of "the inward, subjective, dreamlike nature of many of his pictures, which are dreamlike even when they take place in broad daylight." Typically, critics put a negative spin on this dreamlike aspect. "Call it loneliness," wrote Mark Feeney in the *Boston Globe*. To Troyen, it is unfulfilled yearning:

> Many of Hopper's paintings featuring women bring together isolation, sensuality, and unease. Some evoke the pathos of solitude literally laid bare. Others crackle with erotic tension. But most create an environment in which the anticipation of meaningful connection is inevitably disappointed.

The obvious inference is that Hopper is all about sexual repression. This is America, after all, land of the Puritans, and according to one critic, Hopper had "the Anglo-Saxon's capacity for Puritanism." In *Office at Night*, a curvaceous woman stands at a file cabinet in an alluring pose, while her male coworker sits at a desk staring hard at a piece of paper. Neither looks at the other. The woman seems to be stealing a glance, but in fact her eyes are downcast. It is easy to imagine that these two people are gripped by desire but paralyzed by inhibition. But does this mean all of Hopper's brooding, detached figures are best seen as Puritans seething with lust? Of course not. As Troyen suggests, the connection yearned for by Hopper's people is "meaningful," even if "inevitably disappointed."

If Hopperesque means hopelessly cut off from others, even when they are present, then his reputation as a ruthless chronicler of a peculiarly American form of alienation, transience, and anomie is deserved. The trouble is, this view of Hopper makes him "depressing" rather than "uplifting," to borrow the nontechnical language of the average museum-goer. And that makes it hard to explain his success. In a perceptive essay about *Nighthawks*, co-curator Judith A. Barter reports that "*Nighthawks* was an instantly popular picture. It was requested so continuously and lent so often to art galleries, museum exhibitions, and even state fairs that by 1953 it required conservation."

In postwar America, depressing art did not typically find a big welcome at state fairs. So maybe Hopper is not so depressing after all?

Let us return to Hopper's love of light, and his use of it first as a unifying device and later as a consoling and inspiring presence. To appreciate the unifying aspect, look again at the New England watercolors. Walk into any gallery in Cape Ann, Massachusetts, or Ogunquit, Maine, and you will see dozens of pretty pictures full of bright, warm colors. But look again, and you will see that most of them contain no light. What they do contain, and what someone like Thomas Kinkade turns out by the truckload, is *lighting*: Theatrical, fake, formulaic, predictable. It takes true artistry to paint real light—firelight, lamplight, most of all sunlight—splashing, stroking, and saturating the surface of things in the living moment. Hopper achieved this artistry early, and while his oils lack the spontaneity of his watercolors and can be theatrical at times (*Nighthawks* being the salient example),

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Summertime *(1943)*

the light in them is never fake, formulaic, or predictable.

Consider how Hopper's world looks in the absence of light. One of his early New York canvases, *The City* (1927), offers a distorted view of Washington Square seen from the fifth or sixth floor of an unseen building. Edmund Wilson, who lived on the square at the time, was so appalled by this distortion he denounced the painting in a newspaper column entitled "The Crushing of Washington Square." But *The City* is ugly, even if you've never laid eyes on Washington Square, because it has no sun. Under a dull overcast sky, a motley collection of buildings stand around like strangers at a bus stop, not clashing but not connecting either. The contrast could not be greater with another masterpiece, *Early Sunday Morning* (1930), in which a normally unassuming row of Seventh Avenue storefronts is gloriously transformed by strong, directional sunlight.

Hopper's human figures seem so sunk into themselves, so oblivious to their surroundings, one could imagine the artist taking a Manichean view of matter as an evil swamp within which the light of the spirit is trapped. But this is not Hopper's vision. To the contrary, he finds redemption in the play of visible light on visible objects, especially human bodies. Sometimes the light caresses, as in *Room in Brooklyn* (1932), where a spot of sun warms the back of a woman's neck. Sometimes it guards, as in *New York Movie* (1939), where a wall sconce casts a benevolent glow on the head of a lonely usherette. And sometimes it ravishes, as in *Summertime* (1943), where the sun burns brazenly through the sheer fabric of a woman's dress.

The traditional term for compositions in light and dark is chiaroscuro (or, when taken to extremes, tenebrism). Hopper uses chiaroscuro to create a spectrum of emotion, from despair to hope, and to situate a human figure at the appropriate point along it. Chiaroscuro operates differently in each painting, more or less darkening the feeling of being trapped and more or less illuminating the path of release. Immobility is necessary for it to work, because Hopper's human figures are not just the objects of this treatment, they are also its subjects.

John Updike once wrote that Hopper's people appear to be listening, but not to each other. This seems about right. As Judith A. Barter expresses it, "They are not accessible to us or to each other, as they are absorbed in something beyond their physical surroundings."

Most visitors pass quickly through the final room of the exhibition, but this is a mistake, because it contains what amounts to a full confession by the artist. Hopper's last major work, completed in 1963, four years before his death, is *Sun in an Empty Room*. I write this on a New England fall day, when the sunshine is clear and beautiful but no longer warm. Hopper once explained to a friend that he preferred Cape Cod to Maine because the winter came too quickly in Maine. I know just what he means. To New Englanders (and to everyone who lives in a similar climate), there is no more poignant harbinger of death than the autumn sun, which does its best to reach us with its old force but cannot, because of inexorably increasing distance.

The trees outside the window of Hopper's empty room are still green, but the painting's autumnal mood is accentuated by the quality of the light. The sun pouring into the room makes oblongs of light and dark, but the real darkness is, paradoxically, outside, under the trees. There's not a lot of it, but it is exceedingly black. Spend a few minutes in front of this painting (which will be easy, because no one else does) and ask yourself: Is this depressing or uplifting?

Hopper's answer is the same one we get from life: *It is both.* ♦

DELAWARE ART MUSEUM

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Armed Democracy

The battles within the war on terror.

BY TERRY EASTLAND

Jack Goldsmith was a first-term Bush appointee who, from October 2003 to July 2004, headed the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel. OLC provides legal advice to the president and the executive branch. Like his predecessors, including such luminaries as William Rehnquist, Antonin Scalia, and Theodore Olson, Goldsmith dealt with classified information and opined on highly sensitive legal issues. Necessarily for Goldsmith, many of his opinions dealt with the war on terrorism.

The Terror Presidency
Law and Judgment Inside the Bush Administration
by Jack Goldsmith
Norton, 256 pp., $25.95

Goldsmith, it became known after he left OLC, withdrew several post-9/11 OLC opinions, including two on interrogation, which critics charged with supporting torture. In *The Terror Presidency* Goldsmith, now teaching at the Harvard Law School, recounts his labors on the job, the disagreements he had with others in the Bush administration, and his resignation.

As usual with a book by a former Department of Justice official, Goldsmith submitted his manuscript to the department for its review. Officials there told me that he was advised of his legal obligation not to disclose privileged information. They were also concerned that lawyers at the OLC might find themselves less willing to speak their minds for fear that a colleague might be, in effect, taking mental notes for a book. The upshot would be an Office of Legal Counsel less able to offer its best legal advice, a deprivation for any president.

Goldsmith, I am told, accepted some but not all of the "numerous" editorial suggestions made by Justice officials, evidently confident that he was striking the right balance. It's hard for an outsider to judge whether he did so or not, but it has to be noted that this book runs risks for a department whose importance in the war on terrorism is manifest, and whose finest traditions Goldsmith claims to respect. Even assuming that Goldsmith has not violated legal norms, is it really a good thing—is it seemly—for a former head of the Office of Legal Counsel to unbutton himself about the work he did for his clients, chief among them the president of the United States?

The propriety of writing a book like this is a question that inevitably comes to mind for those familiar with the Department of Justice. It is a fair question. Still, if you can set aside the matter of the book's seemliness, *The Terror Presidency* is not uninteresting. The title is unfortunate because Goldsmith is not contending, as some on the left do, that the Bush presidency threatens terror. Rather, Goldsmith uses "the terror presidency" generically, to mean that every presidency for the foreseeable future is going to have to deal with terror. Goldsmith has some important things to say about the difficulties President Bush has faced, and doubtless his successors will face, in combating terrorism, and the advice he offers them—ironically, not so much legal as political, and this from a lawyer who says that before he joined the Bush administration he was not very interested in politics—is worth mulling. But Jack Goldsmith's own story dominates the narrative.

Goldsmith might not have told his story but for a push from the press. In late 2004, toward the end of his first semester at Harvard, news stories were published associating him with the interrogation opinions, notwithstanding that it was he who had nullified them. Professors asked to comment on their new colleague faulted the school for failing to scrutinize Goldsmith's apparently nefarious work before it hired him.

But later, in early 2006, *Newsweek* published a story that painted Goldsmith quite differently—as "the central figure in a secret but intense rebellion of a small coterie of Bush administration lawyers." The story told "a quietly dramatic profile in courage," of how Goldsmith led other department lawyers in standing up to administration "hardliners" who held expansive views of executive power, chief among them David Addington, Dick Cheney's chief of staff; and how they fought to bring interrogation and other counterterrorism policies, including those involving surveillance, within the law, with Goldsmith withdrawing the two interrogation opinions.

Goldsmith writes in *The Terror Presidency* that he liked the *Newsweek* story better. But he didn't like being called a hero by Bush critics and worried that their praise "would make it appear, incorrectly, that I had been currying favor in my new environment at the expense of my old colleagues." Even more, he says, he was concerned about "the Manichean tone of the *Newsweek* story, a tone one sees so often when the press and intellectuals criticize the Bush administration attempts to balance security and liberty." His "fights with David Addington and others were not struggles between the forces of good and evil," between people who love the Constitution and those who would shred it. To the contrary, he writes, all parties were acting "in good faith to protect the country." Disturbed by the incorrect and conflicting press accounts of his time at OLC, aiming to tell his story on his terms, Goldsmith was shopping a book proposal by the summer of 2006.

A professor at the University of Chicago Law School specializing in international law, Goldsmith came to Washington in 2002 as a special assistant to Jim Haynes, the Pentagon's top lawyer.

Terry Eastland is publisher of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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Guantánamo Bay, 2002

CORBIS

The war powers scholar John Yoo, then a deputy at OLC, had recommended him for the job. Yoo worked on counterterrorism issues with White House counsel Alberto Gonzales and Addington, and he was their choice to head OLC in the summer of 2003 when the incumbent, Jay Bybee, became a circuit judge.

Unfortunately for Yoo, his close working relationship with the White House alienated Attorney General John Ashcroft, who blackballed Yoo as Bybee's successor. Goldsmith writes that he had no desire to advance in the administration and that he had informed Haynes of his intention to return to teaching. But Yoo, who had shaped the law on interrogation that Goldsmith later found problematic, suggested his friend for the position. So did Haynes.

Goldsmith reports that, in the job interview he had with Gonzales and Addington, there was no discussion about his disagreements with administration legal policies, even though Haynes was aware of them. Goldsmith thought that the government needed more elaborate procedures for identifying and detaining enemy combatants; that the administration should "embrace rather than resist" judicial review of its wartime legal policy decisions; and that the administration should have worked with Congress (especially since it was controlled by the same party) to put its counterterrorism policies on a sounder legal footing. Goldsmith also had been critical of what he saw as "unnecessarily broad assertions of presidential power in an obscure draft opinion" composed by Yoo.

"After an uneventful confirmation hearing," writes Goldsmith, he soon found himself taking positions at odds with what the White House—meaning Gonzales and Addington—wanted. In his first opinion, he held that the Fourth Geneva Convention applied to all Iraqis, including those suspected of belonging to al Qaeda. Thus, violations of the convention could be punished under the domestic war crimes statute. Goldsmith writes that Addington was "plain mad," insisting (apparently incorrectly) that the president had already decided the question. But Goldsmith was not asked to change the opinion. It stuck.

Goldsmith also discusses the time he went to the White House to advise that he could not find proper legal footing for "an important counterterrorism initiative." Addington's "angry response" was: "If you rule that way, the blood of the hundred thousand people who die in the next attack will be on *your* hands."

And then there were the two interrogation opinions. The first, dated August 1, 2002, was addressed to Ashcroft from Bybee, since he was the assistant attorney general for the Office of Legal Counsel. Drafted by Yoo, the opinion provided part of the legal basis, Goldsmith writes, for what President Bush later confirmed were "alternative" interrogation procedures used at secret locations on, among other terrorist leaders, Abu Zubaydah, a top al Qaeda operative, and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who planned the 9/11 attacks. The second opinion was from Yoo to Haynes and dated March 1, 2003. Unlike the first opinion, which is in the public domain, having long since been leaked, the second opinion remains classified, though Goldsmith notes public confirmation of the fact that it served as the controlling authority for a Pentagon report that "contained much of the same analysis as" the August 1, 2002, opinion.

The main legal issue in both opinions concerned the effect upon interrogation procedures of a law banning torture and making it a capital crime. The law defined the prohibition on torture narrowly, yet it contained enough ambiguities to require legal interpretation. Yoo has said that the intent behind the first opinion (and thus the second) was to give sufficiently clear guidance so that "our agents would know exactly

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what was prohibited and what was not."

The opinion defined torture as acts that cause the amount of pain "associated with a sufficiently serious physical condition or injury such as death, organ failure, or serious impairment of body functions." Acts not meeting that definition were not torture, and if agents actually did commit torture, defenses against criminal prosecution were available—such as the prevention of catastrophic harm and self-defense. The opinion also held that the torture law would be a violation of the president's constitutional authority if it prevented him "from gaining the intelligence he believes necessary to prevent attacks upon the United States."

Goldsmith writes that he found the opinions "deeply flawed: sloppily reasoned, overbroad, and incautious in asserting extraordinary constitutional authorities on behalf of the president." He withdrew the March 1, 2003, opinion first, but also advised the Pentagon that it could continue the 24 interrogation techniques it had adopted in light of the now rescinded opinion. They still were fully legal.

In June 2004 Goldsmith withdrew the August 1, 2002, opinion. He was not, however, in a position to advise on the legality of the CIA's specific interrogation techniques. That was left for others to do. The "replacement" opinion provided "a far more rigorous and balanced interpretation of the law," says Goldsmith. And yet no previously approved CIA interrogation technique had to change as a result of the new opinion.

According to Goldsmith, Addington was the only administration official who was still defending the critical August 1, 2002, memo. Yet Goldsmith doesn't report that Addington—who gets worse press than anyone in the administration, with the possible exception of his boss—was angry with him for withdrawing the interrogation opinions. Perhaps Addington, who has declined to comment on *The Terror Presidency*, understood that Goldsmith's actions would not necessarily affect the interrogation techniques used by the CIA and the military: They could continue as before.

The interrogation opinions weren't the only ones Goldsmith withdrew. Appearing on an ABC evening news broadcast recently, Goldsmith answered the question of how many by saying the number was "more than two and less than 10." Doubtless he set a record for the number of OLC opinions overturned within a single administration (and doing so in less than a year). Shortly before Goldsmith resigned, Addington—before a group of administration lawyers, including Goldsmith—said to him sarcastically, "Since you've withdrawn so many legal opinions that the President and others have been relying on, we need to know which ones you still stand by."

A constant theme of The Terror Presidency *is that the Bush administration, far from being 'indifferent to wartime legal constraints,' has been 'strangled by law.' Indeed, 'the war has been lawyered to death.'*

"It was a biting point," Goldsmith comments, "and not entirely unfair."

Goldsmith writes that he expected his superiors, having had it with so many withdrawn opinions, would tell him when it was time for him to go. But he doesn't report that they ever did. Rather, it was Goldsmith who told himself to go. Why? Mainly because "important people within the administration had come to question my fortitude for the job and my reliability."

Goldsmith does not identify these people, though one surely is Addington. Goldsmith's friendly treatment of Ashcroft and Gonzales suggests that neither became Goldsmith skeptics. Maybe Goldsmith's point is that he felt isolated. He says he considered resigning on three different occasions, and when he finally decided to resign, he chose to do so on the same day that he advised the White House of his withdrawal of the August 1, 2002, opinion. There was cunning in this: "The timing," he writes, "would make it hard for the White House to reverse my opinion without making it seem like I had resigned in protest." Goldsmith got what he wanted; there was no White House reversal.

Was Goldsmith right to withdraw the opinions he did? The Terror Presidency invites that question, but it's a hard one to answer. Most of the withdrawn opinions and their replacements are classified. So a side-by-side review isn't possible. It is possible to compare the different lawyering on the interrogation issue, and Goldsmith makes some points against the original opinion, finding serious shortcomings in its interpretation of certain statutes. But he also acknowledges that the opinion was written at a time when the administration had good reasons to worry about a follow-up attack on the anniversary of 9/11. Fear of "bodies in the street," Goldsmith quotes one ranking Justice official as telling him, is his main explanation for why the opinion was written the way it was.

Goldsmith is candid about the impact of his decision to withdraw the opinion:

> I had done something I had tried very hard to avoid: I had changed the rules in the middle of the game in a way that potentially jeopardized national security and that certainly harmed an institution I had come to admire, the CIA. . . . The agency had been asked to go out on a limb in 2002, and it had demanded and received absolute legal assurances from the Department of Justice and the White House. I had done the unthinkable in withdrawing its golden shield.

He had done that, of course, because he believed that the rule of law, whatever he may have thought about the policy behind it, left him no other choice.

Goldsmith tells his story while also discussing the political and legal context in which George W. Bush has fought the war on terrorism. Goldsmith notes that when the United States entered

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World War II, "Neither the law nor the legal culture presented any real threat to aggressive presidential action." Since then the courts have placed constraints on executive power, some of them a result of the civil liberties revolution. And Congress, which has come to have less regard for the presidency, has passed laws affecting executive action in wartime. As was *not* true when Franklin Roosevelt set up a military commission to try the eight Nazi saboteurs captured in the United States in 1942—a story Goldsmith usefully retells—a phalanx of skilled litigators now stands ready to challenge this or that war policy or operation.

It belongs uniquely to the executive, however, to carry the war to an enemy. And to do that President Bush has had to consult lawyers at every turn. A constant theme of *The Terror Presidency* is that the Bush administration, far from being "indifferent to wartime legal constraints," has been "strangled by law." Indeed, "the war has been lawyered to death."

Goldsmith closes with a chapter on what future presidents—facing terrorist threats as they almost certainly will—might learn from the Bush years. The most fundamental one is "to establish trust with the American people." This cannot be done, says Goldsmith, by a unilateral approach grounded in assertions of executive power. A president, instead, should welcome judicial review of executive decisions, and should seek legislative authority for new policies. A president should not eschew ordinary politics, "the need to explain, to justify, to convince, to get people on board, to compromise." A president who does such things has a better chance than not of strengthening his authority. That approach also may help us prevail in war.

Agree or disagree with Jack Goldsmith on these points, he has written a book that also demonstrates just how hard it is to be president today in an era of abiding terrorist threat. Surely we are fortunate that, whatever else may be said about George W. Bush's war presidency, on his watch, so far at least, the country has not seen a repeat of 9/11. ♦

'Modest Modernist'

A century late, Robert Walser's vision in English.

BY CHARLES PETERSON

The Assistant
by Robert Walser
Translated by
Susan Bernofsky
New Directions, 304 pp., $16.95

The early 20th century was not a good time for modesty. All the best artists affected it, and while there exists a certain inherent humility in the Flaubertian *mot juste*—constantly supplicating before the oracle of language—the model artist of the time is Nietzsche's overman, the master experimenter: "Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed."

For the Romantics, the humble, unchanging countryside supplied the fertile yet fickle ground for the imagination. The modernists still rely on the vagaries of inspiration, but they try to take their fate in hand, terraforming the soul to produce works of genius, as well as hubris.

What makes Robert Walser such a difficult writer to categorize is that he is, perhaps, the sole instance of a mongrel species: the modest modernist. That might not sound like an especially rare beast, let alone the literary equivalent of a chimera. After all, the flip side of modernism is the obsession with the primitive: African art, in the case of Picasso; a lower-class wife, in that of Joyce. But the primitive, while experienced with the humble directness of the aficionado (Hemingway's bullfights) is then appropriated into works of art that the bullfighters find boring.

Wordsworth, at first, just wanted to write a better folk song; his experience was mediated not by the vast superstructures of the modernists but "emotion recollected in tranquility." Hence, while the Romantic ideal was the peasant poet, the nightingale-like spirit who would naturally compose inimitable ballads, the same ideal, transposed a hundred years into the future, sounds like the setup for a bad joke: a full-blown modernist suddenly walking out of the countryside, fractured narrative in hand.

To some degree, the life of Robert Walser is that joke, or as close as you could get in the early 20th century. His short stories and novels display a sense of irony as developed as any of his contemporaries; yet they remain provincially unrefined. Born to a shopkeeper in small-town, German-speaking Switzerland, he was taken out of school at 14 and apprenticed as a clerk. This alone makes Walser unusual, since few modernists possessed so little education. Furthermore, the provinciality of the Swiss is archetypal in Germany; famously intransigent, with an accent that sounds hickish, they are considered even more backward than the Bavarians.

Fortunately, two of Walser's older brothers became highly successful—one as a professor, the other as an illustrator—and the budding young author managed to place a collection of short pieces with Insel Verlag, the publishers of Rilke and Hofmannsthal. But when Walser moved to Berlin to join his brother Karl, the illustrator, he felt out of place in literary society and quickly fell to playing pranks. One time he walked up to Hugo von Hofmannsthal, the great poet and librettist, and inquired whether he might for a moment forget that he was famous. At parties, Walser was well known for his baffling backwoods jokes; thrown into a cab, he'd hop out the other side and return to

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the salon. Once he and his brother even trapped Frank Wedekind—the author of *Spring Awakening*—in a revolving door and spun him around and around, shouting "muttonhead."

Walser nonetheless found continued success as a writer, placing regular *feuilletons*—short prose sketches—in the newspapers and publishing three novels in quick succession: *The Tanner Family* (1907), *The Assistant* (1908), and *Jakob von Gunten* (1909). Although *Jakob von Gunten* and many of the sketches have already been translated, this is the first time *The Assistant* has appeared in English—a hundred-year delay that, despite the novel's merits, comes as little surprise.

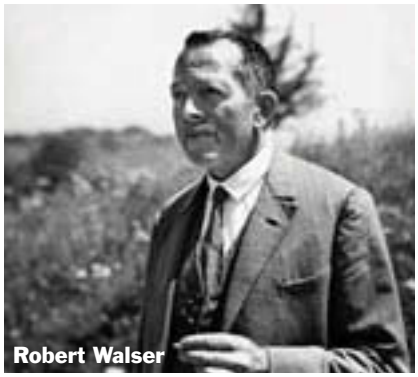
The premise is almost promising: A hapless young clerk, Joseph Marti, begins working for one Herr Tobler, a half-mad inventor who fritters away his inheritance on such promising ventures as the Marksmen's Vending Machine, a clever device which spits out "not a little slab of chocolate, peppermint or the like, but rather a pack of live ammunition." But as these characters progress through nearly 300 pages, the plot goes nowhere and Walser, ever humble, refuses to gin up interest by pushing Joseph and Tobler to the defiant psychological extremes of, say, Dostoevsky. Where the Karamazovs dream of killing their father, Joseph takes the entire novel to ponder whether he should quit his job—or even demand his salary.

Refusing to push characters to extremes is not so terribly unusual among modernists. Just think of Leopold Bloom or Mrs. Dalloway, Nick Adams or Joseph K. But Joyce and Woolf redeem everyday life by pushing their prose to some of the greatest extremes in literature, while Hemingway and Kafka strip their writing down to its ennobling essentials. Walser once bragged that he never blotted a line, and it seems that we should believe him: He apparently wrote *The Assistant* in six weeks. Uncharitably, you might say that Walser pairs the boredom of Joyce's plots with the hack prose of Dostoevsky. And yet Walser is a fine writer, and this pairing only suggests the strange paradox at the heart of his sensibility: how he combines everyday life with pedestrian prose in a way that somehow redeems both.

Consider the following passage from *The Assistant*:

> Everything was so gentle, so overcast, so light and lovely—it all became just as large as it was small, just as near-at-hand as distant, just as extensive as minute and just as dainty as significant. Soon everything Joseph beheld appeared to have become a natural, quiet, benevolent dream, not such a terribly beautiful one, no: a modest dream, and yet it was beautiful.

You can see here what makes Walser so attractive and so difficult to define. "Light and lovely" looks like a cliché even if it isn't, and the list that follows


Robert Walser

THE ROBERT WALSER FOUNDATION

sounds tossed off. But it's not bad; indeed, it's almost very good—a compliment that carries an insult and yet, as you reach the end, it somehow seems arrogant to demand more.

Just compare Walser's modest beauty with a few lines from Rilke's "First Elegy," written only four years later: "*For beauty is nothing / But the beginning of terror, which we are still just able to endure / And we are so awed because it serenely disdains / To destroy us*." If Rilke sums up the arrogant side of modernist aesthetics, Walser suggests that the same sensibility need not be nearly so high-strung.

I took great pleasure in Walser's writing, finding him a relief from many of his overbearing contemporaries. But there is something troubling about his appeal. Almost all of his defenders, from J.M. Coetzee to Sven Birkerts to Susan Sontag, warn that not liking Walser amounts to an inability to appreciate the small—a kind of arrogant repulsion at the insistently humble. But the dialectic of humility in which Walser takes part has, for most of literary history, been driven by religion. Pride and humility crop up all the time in civil society, but they are rarely taken to extremes; in politics, one might hope to know one's place. Only before God must all abase themselves, absolutely humble. For those who can't submit, this absolute demand leads to a cycle of despair.

James Wood has argued that such dialectics of pride—where "pride . . . is the sin of humble people and humility is the punishment of proud people"—almost only occur in religious writers, or writers deeply affected by religion. Such cycles are not necessarily religious; philosophically, pride comes down to the problem of skepticism, doubting whether other people really exist. But the great demands that a higher power places on humility has driven authors to some of the most remarkable extremes in fiction: Shakespeare's Hamlet, Chaucer's Pardoner, Dostoevsky, and in the modern period, Hamsun and Beckett.

It's tempting to think of Walser as the worthy shadow of these better-known authors, but he's the first instance of another type entirely. Untroubled by religion or philosophy, tepidly dissatisfied yet afraid to challenge himself, it often seems as if Walser is the first instance of the Last Man in his artistic guise—a beautiful sensibility with a constant bourgeois fear of asserting himself. The tension between ages, religious and secular, is what makes modernist art so powerful; without that tension, the edifice crumbles.

Kafka, who was mistaken for a Walser pseudonym when young, provides the most salient comparison. Where Kafka's insistently austere style made the greatest argument for his own nobility, picking up the pieces to create defiantly artistic works, Walser fell to mimicking and mocking his surroundings, toying with the fragments of culture like a child. That's a harsh judgment, especially for a writer so tragic as Walser, who lived out the last few decades of his life in an asylum. Still, while I enjoy Walser's playful style, I find it difficult to celebrate his achievement. ♦

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Goodbye, Dubai

The best way to see it is receding in the mirror.

BY ANN MARLOWE

Last February I woke up one morning in New Jersey and realized I couldn't take one more winter there. I had to move to a warm climate. I was thinking Scottsdale, but then the chance to work in my family's business in Dubai came up.

Samira is a tall, attractive Afghan-American woman of 40, as typical as anyone of the constant influx of people to Dubai. We're struggling to make ourselves heard over the deafening international thump-thump music at Buddha Bar, the restaurant of the moment where we're having dinner with my friend Karl.

Samira likes Dubai. I loathe it. I've visited briefly 13 times, on the way to or from Kabul, never for more than a week, beginning in 2002. While it has expanded enormously over that time, it has also become ever more traffic-choked and homogenous. And although an article touting Dubai's "fabulousness" appears in a reputable American publication almost weekly these days, the truth is that it's a bad place that people from worse places think is a good place.

The hotels are, after all, packed with vacationers. If you are from a small city in Russia, or the eastern part of Germany, a third-rate hotel on the beach in Dubai is probably the best place you can imagine. Posh décor! All-you-can-eat buffets! (The smoked fish is often outstanding.) A beach in the hot sun! (Well, there is a cement plant next door, but only part of it shows over the big fence.) A bathtub-warm sea! (Even if it has a visibility of about one foot, and no discernable marine life.)

If you like to vacation in Las Vegas and enjoy the climate in Phoenix or Houston, Dubai *might* be the place for you. It joins the worst of urbanism with the worst of the suburbs: sterile towers, no parkland, traffic murderously dangerous to pedestrians, full of chain stores and restaurants galore. About the only thing in its favor is ethnic diversity. But I dislike the people—a few friends aside—as much as the built environment.

Who are the worst? It could be the fawning, passive-aggressive politeness of the Filipinos who fill many service positions here. They are probably homesick and exploited and behind the murmured "No" to your request is a burning hatred of what they do and where they are. Or the pedantic nature of the Indians higher up on the hospitality ladder. They relish explaining why you cannot have a cappuccino in the dining room with your dinner, but only in the lobby bar. (The Russians are probably worse on this count: A return to their repressed inner commissar gives a peculiar zest to their "No.")

It could be the many Emirati men, who treat the Filipinos and Indians like dirt. Or the overstuffed Germans working as engineers and architects, who take a certain relish in recounting how young Arab men, on finding out they are German, will explain how much they admire Hitler. ("Of course I tell them that this is horrible, but if Israel continues to behave in such a brutal way . . . ")

The Europeans are here for a degree of responsibility or level of earnings they can't find in their no-employment economies, but they also lack the refinement and cultural awareness that is the saving grace of most Europeans' bad politics. They are the kind of Europeans who don't mind eating imported processed food and living in jerry-built, air-conditioned towers.

Not everyone who comes here for business reasons likes it. Karl has spent years in Saudi Arabia and Kabul, but his home is Washington, and he shares my interest in places with character and texture.

"They keep telling me if I go here or there," he says, "I'll see the really exciting side of Dubai. But whenever I get there, it's like the restaurant we were at last night. Dead."

That was an intriguingly tacky Russian nightclub with very inexpensive *blinis* with red caviar. It had a floor show featuring a band and a half-dozen well-trained dancers of both sexes; but it was only half-full, and the other customers were a stolid lot—a mix of Russians, Arabs, and who-knows-what who didn't seem to be having a great time. No sense of revelry. I hoped the dancers weren't among the many immigrants from low-wage economies in a sort of debt slavery to those who brought them here. Every day the newspapers report the rescue of some woman in this predicament.

Buddha Bar doesn't have a sense of revelry, either—despite its reputation as the most happening restaurant in Dubai, and despite a punishingly loud sound system. But Dubai is about business, not fun. We were talking business, too. I was impressed to learn that Samira not only has an undergrad degree in finance, but is an M.D. Karl has two degrees in finance and did a stint at the World Bank. Everybody around us looked as though they had studied some crushingly boring stuff at one point or another—except for a petite Emirati couple in local dress, he all in white, she all in black.

But then, you have to have paid your dues to afford the prices at Buddha Bar: the $15 appetizers, $100 sushi platters, $11 martinis. The food, though fresh and tasty, is not on a level with comparably priced restaurants in New York or Rome or Paris. It lacks finesse. Here, too, the interstitial nature of Dubai comes through: The waiter forgot one of our orders. This is absolutely normal in cheap places in Dubai—it's an attention deficit disorder thing that is also pervasive in the Third World—but I didn't expect to find it at these prices.

One thing Dubai has going for it is energy. As I left the plane that

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brought me from JFK, and followed the extremely long series of halls and escalators to Passport Control, I realized that my usual position in the front of the crowd was being challenged, and then taken, by dozens of young men in *shalwar kameez* striding at a jogging pace past me.

In Europe, where people are leisurely, and in the United States, where they are fat, I'm usually one of the first from my plane to reach Passport Control. Not here. My first thought was that we needed more people like the running men in *shalwar kameez* in America. It was 8 P.M., and they had places to go and business to do. But they may be here because it's hard for a Pakistani or Yemeni or Bangladeshi man, a young Muslim man, to get a work visa for the United States. And I'm not prepared to argue that this is a bad thing. While I was in the air, news of an airport bombing ran across the screen.

After the Russian nightclub, there's a long cab ride back to my hotel in Sharjah. It's 3 in the morning and, finally, the road is almost free of traffic. Sharjah is the next Emirate down, and I'm staying at a four-star hotel there because it's about $100 cheaper than it would be at my usual haunt, the Dubai Marine Beach Hotel. When I started coming here the five-star hotels were a bargain, $120 or so, but those days are long gone. The downside of Sharjah is the traffic-choked drive to Dubai, plus it's a dry Emirate. If you have to have a beer with lunch, it's not the place for you.

Sharjah is at about the level of development Dubai was when I first started coming here, with more local businesses than chain stores. A whole row of coffee roasters intrigues me, but I know that if I go for a daytime visit the traffic will be a nightmare. The average Sharjah resident who commutes to work in Dubai spends an hour-and-a-half in each direction.

The next day, I swim laps in the 18-meter pool for 45 minutes and only three people interrupt my solitude, each taking a five-minute dip. The crowds, and the kids, are in the free-form beachside pool. Many of the guests at the hotel are Arab—perhaps because the absence of alcohol is no problem for them, or because they're used to the hundred-degree temperatures and 90 percent humidity of the Gulf summer. Two pretty girls speaking refined-sounding Arabic (I can't tell from where) walk past me to the beach. I wonder if they know how to swim; that's my acid test for Third Worldism. Even the elites in Third World countries like Afghanistan can't swim. They pass, barely, doggy-paddling side by side.

The Dubai skyline

JOSE FUSTE RAGA / CORBIS

Then I have a perfectly decent chicken tikka sandwich and a chocolate milkshake at the beach bar and take the first of the day's two trying cab rides. This was just to the Sharjah Souk a few miles away, but Sharjah's Union Taxi Co. is staffed almost exclusively by savage-looking bearded gentlemen who speak only Urdu, or some mountain dialect of Arabic. Or so they say. Running up the meter out of linguistic confusion is another tactic. This driver is in the Urdu group; he understands some Farsi and Arabic but deposits me near a row of squalid downtown shops. A series of consultations with pedestrians lead us to the right road, but he misses the exit, clearly marked in English and Arabic, *Souk Merkezi*. But then, he might be illiterate.

I've been told that the Central Souk is the cheapest place to buy Kashmiri embroidered clothes, and they are about half the Dubai shopping mall price. The shopkeepers are from Kashmir and some have a scary jihadi look. Some seem rather desperate: There are few shoppers. Upstairs are some Afghan shops, including one with blue Herati glass.

I poke my head in and say, "*Khub asteen*?" (You're good?—the universal Afghan greeting.) The shopkeeper breaks into a broad smile and invites me in, but I'm trying to get to Buddha Bar on time so I have to decline.

The next cab is even worse. I turn down the first three wild and woolly drivers, none of whom knows where Dubai Marina is. (This is like not knowing where Georgetown is in Washington, or where the Upper East Side is in New York.) Finally, I resign myself to a bad time and get in with another fellow who doesn't know, either.

He speaks Arabic. I can say that I want to go somewhere in Arabic and remember how to say "turn left," "turn right," "straight ahead," "here" and "there," but I can't summon "near," "far," or "faster." You don't normally want to tell a Dubai cabbie to go faster, but this one is an exception. Although Dubai itself is 30 minutes away without traffic, he hugs the right lane, apparently fearing to stray too far from Sharjah. After 40 minutes I put an end to his misery and get out at a shopping center. A Dubai cab pulls up and the Indian driver speaks good English and knows where I'm going.

The next day, it takes only 20 minutes to go from my hotel to Dubai's Terminal Two, a decidedly downscale airport some distance from Terminal One. The flights to the dicey places leave from here: Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq. But the terminal has been slowly upgrading over the years, and now the Duty Free is pretty comprehensive. I usually buy last-minute gifts for Afghan friends here, including liquor, which is no longer sold even to foreigners in Kabul.

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"Are you going to Baghdad?" the Duty Free clerk asks, and I feel that I've qualified for a promotion of sorts. The flights to Kabul and Baghdad leave around the same time, but I can usually tell the Baghdad passengers apart. They are harder. None of the crunchy/Euro/NGO types you see in the Kabul line, and no families. The men are big and silent and usually American. They make no attempt to dress inconspicuously, I assume, because many of them will be carrying guns. This time there are more women—Iraqi women—than I can recall seeing before, which *might* be a good sign.

I can't decide if being thought to be Baghdad-bound is a good thing or not. ♦

Doing Dishes

The unbearable lightness of the naughty literati.

BY RACHEL ABRAMS

For this collection of essays, tantalizingly entitled *Bad Girls*, the novelist Ellen Sussman has rounded up 26 women writers (including herself) to talk about all the ways in which they are now or ever have been Bad.

Just about every one of these novelists, poetesses, and essayists is some kind of prizewinner: One has a Pulitzer, one is a recipient of the Prix France Bleu Gironde; there are a couple of National Book Award finalists; some have bestsellers under their belts; some are professors of creative writing. Two, Joyce Maynard and Erica Jong, are as famous for one infamous piece of writing each as for any of the other 20-odd books of poetry and prose they have collectively produced. The confidence of these women in the capacity of their self-exposure to fascinate others has been rewarded with favorable notices for this collection in the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and elsewhere.

Bad Girls
26 Writers Misbehave
Edited by Ellen Sussman
Norton, 304 pp., $24.95

"Enter at your own risk," Ms. Sussman warns in her introduction. "There's dangerous territory ahead. The ground shifts beneath you. The currents carry you away. There's the harsh smell of wildfire, the hiss of a snake, the bubbling cauldron, the wild winds of the mistral."

Sounds exciting, doesn't it?

What constitutes Badness for these women? Making appearances here are an alcoholic or two, a drug addict, a couple of bulimics, an unfaithful wife, several sluts, a liar, and a cheat. One author gets her kicks, such as they are, from hearing about the exploits of others. Rounding out the group is a penis assessor. All this suggests a decent gossipfest to come, at the very least.

There's certainly plenty of salaciousness. Ms. Sussman's own "Consider the Slut," a numeration of the boys who explored her body when she was 14—to her apparently eternal delight—ends with a peroration on "Making Out" that is as breathlessly steamy as a romance novel. The *New York Times*'s Daphne Merkin, in "Penises I Have Known," delivers a little homily on the male copulatory organ down through history (and literature) before cataloguing her own felicitous encounters with several of them in the flesh.

The poet/novelist Kim Addonizio, stoned on weed and drunk on Scotch and champagne, trolls a writers' conference for a bed partner. When she stumbles on one at the hotel bar, he turns out to be not one of the "overmedicated professors released from their small-town colleges for a few days of . . . drinking, schmoozing, and airing of professional resentments," but rather a refrigerator repairman who can't believe his luck. It's off to her room for a night of . . . something—she's so wasted that, next morning, she can't remember *what*—while her roommate (and now ex-friend) suffers in the next bed.

In "I Am Badder than Omarosa," Michelle Richmond, teacher, novelist, and publisher of the online literary quarterly *Fiction Attic*, writes,

> For a couple of years in high school, I was an enthusiastic member of an overzealous Southern Baptist youth group. It was not beneath me to give a guy a hand job in order to persuade him to attend a Contemporary Christian rock concert. My target audience: track-and-field boys. My message: Religion can be fun!

That bit made me laugh out loud. So did the description by the novelist Kaui Hart Hemmings, in "Author Questionnaire," of a trip to the playground with her daughter: "She went to the sand pit to play with another baby around her age. I couldn't tell if it was a boy or a girl, which was intentional, I assumed. It was one of those organic San Francisco babies dressed to look like a migrant worker or a lesbian."

Sad to say, those two passages are just about the only funny ones in the book.

For *Bad Girls*, with all its promise of disclosure and illumination—and naughty diversion—is really a pretty dreary time. Reading it is like paying a visit to the confessional with members of the *New York Times*'s "Modern Love" club: a tedious plod through territory that has been charted extensively—and stultifyingly—already.

There are no surprises here, and no mistrals. Just a lot of women shooting the breeze about the things women so often discuss when they get together: cruel lovers, rotten husbands, difficult children, crappy bosses, bad parents. It lurches from cockiness, so to speak—Ms. Merkin's Adventures in Penisland—to complaint—"Now that

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women supposedly can be heard," gripes Erica Jong in "My Dirty Secret," "we are still constrained by stereotypes of femininity . . . ghettoized in chick lit, romance, or mystery fiction"—to downright bleak misery.

In "Executrix," the short-story writer Pam Houston recounts without inflection the abuse her father visited on her when she was a child: "He broke my femur when I was four years old. . . . He forced himself on me sexually for so many years I am not entirely certain when it began and when it ended."

In the same flat voice she describes her peculiar forgiveness:

> I have now lived long enough to understand that the things he did are not so different from the things a lot of other fathers do in a lot of other families [*Really?*], and I don't—have never—wanted or expected any more sympathy than any other person who has made it forty-four years into the world.

It's an ugly story, and one can see why it's delivered in the practiced monotone of the therapized woman who has exorcised her demons. But why deliver it at all? Must every piece of writing by a woman be a form of therapy? Must Joyce Maynard relive in print, yet again, her horrible treatment at the hands of J.D. Salinger, and the vicious reception her memoir of her time with him received? Apparently so—and we along with her. At least her "A Good Girl Goes Bad" usefully reminds us that she was an 18-year-old virgin who, thanks to bulimia, looked like a prepubescent 12-year-old when the pedophilic 53-year-old Salinger seduced her.

I have no illusions. I'm not asking the daughters of the sexual revolution to conceive characters like Anna Karenina or Gwendolyn Harleth or that ur-Bad Girl, Becky Sharp. But as long as they continue to insist upon treating their every runny nose, hot flash, rejection, beating, and orgasm as food for thought, and upon using the written word as so much Kleenex for the drying of their tears, I'll stick with Tolstoy and Eliot—and oh, by the way, the wonderful P.D. James, Ms. Jong's derision notwithstanding. ♦

We Aren't Rome

And historical analogies only go so far.

BY AARON MACLEAN

Of all the various suggestions advanced to identify that perilous moment when America—or some ruthless element within it—crossed the Rubicon and entered its imperial age, surely the award for the most creative must remain Gore Vidal's: the introduction of air conditioning to the District of Columbia in the 1930s. The "old republic," as Vidal termed it, could afford to take time off for the summer, but imperial responsibility does not seasonally dwindle simply because the Potomac Valley is roasting humidly like the unpleasant swamp it originally was. Imperial responsibility does not summer on the Eastern Shore.

Are We Rome?
The Fall of an Empire and the Fate of America
by Cullen Murphy
Houghton Mifflin, 272 pp., $24

This suggestion may even take the prize, such that there can be one, for hitting the nail of historical analogy on its head, as other theories arguably do no better to identify a single, definitive hegemonic tipping point. Some hold that the passage, in 1913, of the Sixteenth Amendment (the income tax) was what did it; others that it was the construction of the Pentagon during World War II. Perhaps it is my upbringing as a Virginian, but as far as this parlor game is concerned, I tend to favor Abraham Lincoln's suspension of *habeas corpus* at the outset of the Civil War, not to say his hardened resolve that states could not leave the Union of their own free choice: acts which were morally justifiable but legally unconstitutional, and for which Lincoln met a Caesar-like end.

But the problem with the parlor game, generally speaking, is that no reasonable person can grant that America has, in fact, crossed its Rubicon. Which is not to say that our international role is not in some sense hegemonic, or that our federal government is not massive and unwieldy on a scale appropriate to an empire's. No, rather, the important fact is that when Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon and seized power in Rome, he set in place a dictatorship of one man which, with no lack of turmoil and test, ruled Rome until its fall.

Say what you will about signing statements and unwarranted eavesdropping—current examples of executive overreach—but George W. Bush is no more a dictator (in fact, somewhat less of one) than Andrew Jackson ever was. Congress still has power, even if it does not always exercise it, and both branches still do honor to the role of an impoverished and unarmed judiciary.

So if we are a hegemon, we are somehow a democratic hegemon, which makes efforts to draw lessons from the Roman experience tricky even in the deftest of literary hands. Which brings us to Cullen Murphy's latest book, *Are We Rome? The Fall of an Empire and the Fate of America*. Murphy is as deft as they come, as demonstrated by his decades of contributions to the *Atlantic*, where he was managing editor, and the smattering of books developed out of his magazine work.

The present effort begins well, opening with a lyrical passage comparing historical accounts of traveling emperors and their retinues of bureaucrats, sycophants, and barbarian strongmen, with the spectacle (witnessed personally

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by Murphy) of Air Force One on the ground at Shannon Airport, guarded by thousands of Irish troops and accompanied by a vast aerial caravan of cargo and passenger jets bearing the president's cars, advisors, guards, and beyond. Fine reportage combined with vivid historical description pose the question of the book's title: So much here seems similar that we must ask whether Rome's end and our own will be alike.

Air Force One, Paris, 2002

What follows is less useful. Murphy takes up the question of whether history can teach us anything at all, in general: something of a straw-man argument, which Murphy dutifully dismantles, and with what will be the wholehearted agreement of most of his readers. Yet the more pressing matter is not whether history, in general, can teach us anything; it is whether Roman history can teach us something significant. If one intended to write a book which would use historical precedent to shed light on our own moment in historical time, it might be more obvious to look at the experience of classical Athens (a direct democracy—as far as it went in those days—which ruled the eastern Mediterranean for a time) or, most apropos of all, the British Empire, our direct ancestor in a variety of respects.

But Murphy has chosen to write a book about Rome, and the effort is hobbled by what appears to be a weakness for connections between moments which are not fully, or even very nearly, analogous. Is Washington really "a vast importer and consumer of an empire's riches rather than a producer of anything except words and administration," like Rome? There is some small justice here, but the analogy is overwhelmed by the decidedly un-vast nature of our federal enclave, when compared with the grand cities of New York and Los Angeles: centers of finance and culture much bigger than Washington, and which have no analogues in the Roman Mediterranean. Rome was all of them wrapped into one.

And is our border with Mexico really comparable to Hadrian's Wall? There are still barbarians in our world, but they are not the Latinos who seek not to burn our cities but to find a livelihood here. Murphy concedes the complexity of the very notion of frontiers in the modern world, but having already made the easy Hadrian/Rio Grande comparison, then tries to have the argument both ways by exaggerating the complexity of Roman frontiers, from which we might try to draw lessons for our globalized world.

Are We Rome? is at its weakest when Murphy is at his most partisan. He has a habit of identifying everything the Romans did wrong with everything he dislikes about the Republican party. He never fully declares this prejudice for what it is, from which I must conclude it is either unintentional, meant to be subtle, or considered so obvious as to need no elucidation. The worst instance of this is the chapter on corruption and privatization, which willfully conflates the former and the latter, granting extremely short credit to *any* notion that shifting some of government's tasks to the private sector might be preferable to a bloated federal bureaucracy.

Elsewhere, Murphy makes his politics perfectly clear: "Stop treating government as a necessary evil, and instead rely on it proudly for the big things it can do well." That's right: Avoid Rome's imperial fate by . . . *increasing* the size of government!

The privatization discussion also provides the single most tendentious moment in *Are We Rome?* Murphy attempts to demonstrate that corruption in the early American political class was less widespread than it is in the present day. To do so, he quotes a stern letter of recommendation written by General Washington about Baron von Steuben, of Valley Forge fame, noting the Baron's "true Zeal for our Cause," among other qualifications. The point, it seems, is that when honest old George Washington recommended a man, he did it on the merits. Not like our own age of bronze, summed up, for Murphy, by an email from Jack Abramoff to the Tigua tribe, which makes it clear that if "you guys could do $50k," their interests in Congress might be advanced. And that, as far as argument is concerned, is that: Obviously, corruption is an invention of recent years, probably of the Right, and something at which our Republic's earlier generations would have blushed.

This level of reasoning and rhetoric is, I think, beneath Cullen Murphy. But he is also an elegant writer, and there are worthwhile points of argument here and there—useful warnings about the alienation of our political elites from the military, for example. Yet what is useful about *Are We Rome?* isn't original, and many of the historical analogies aren't very useful. The problem is not that the comparisons are mainly fair while differing in important details; it is that they are fair in important details while differing on the main points.

Even if one accepts the premise that history can teach us something, it doesn't mean it can teach us anything we want. ♦

CORBIS

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Heartbreak Hotel

Where you don't want to stay. **BY JOHN PODHORETZ**

In 1972 Neil Simon teamed up with director Elaine May, the greatest female comic sketch artist of her time, on a movie with a heart of ice called *The Heartbreak Kid*. Lenny, a sporting-goods salesman who wants to be a playboy swinger, marries Lila, a Long Island girl who will not sleep with him without a wedding ring. The drive from New York to Florida for their honeymoon is a nightmare. The sex is lousy. Lila is annoying with her clumsy affection and repellent when it comes to her eating habits.

The Heartbreak Kid
Directed by Bobby Farrelly and Peter Farrelly

When they arrive in Miami Beach, Lila gets a gruesome sunburn that confines her to their hotel room. Lenny goes down to the beach alone and encounters a flirtatious co-ed played by Cybill Shepherd. He spends a couple of days flirting back, never telling her he's married and spinning wild lies about his absences to his wife. Eventually he takes Lila to the hotel restaurant and dumps his sniveling, weeping bride by telling her he knows the best way for her to be happy is to experience pain that will make her grow. Then he moves to Minnesota to win over Cybill Shepherd, whose WASPy family cannot withstand a Jewish steamroller who will say and do anything to get what he wants.

Nobody here is even remotely attractive. We only feel for Lila because she is pathetic. Cybill Shepherd's character is beautiful but unpleasant. Her father is an anti-Semitic jerk. Lenny is one of the most distasteful protagonists in motion-picture history. And this movie's merciless portrait of tacky Jews is only equaled by its vicious portrait of soulless WASPs. Aristotle said comedy offers a vision of the "painlessly ugly," but then Aristotle died 2500 years before *The Heartbreak Kid*, the most painful American comedy ever made.

It probably seemed like an inspired idea to star Ben Stiller in a remake of *The Heartbreak Kid*. Stiller has become one of the most financially successful performers in box-office history by specializing in the comedy of humiliation. He suffers so you don't have to. In mammoth hits like *There's Something About Mary*, *Meet the Parents*, and its sequel, he is maimed and tortured and exposed as a liar and humiliated and insulted and defamed and teased.

Far from being the comedy of bad manners that is May's version, Stiller's *Heartbreak Kid* is a wild and raunchy farce in the manner of *There's Something About Mary.* This is not surprising, since it was cowritten and directed by the Farrelly Brothers, who also made that landmark comedy with Stiller. It's much easier to take than the original. But this new movie's effort to replace the painful social comedy of 1972 with the more palatable comedy of humiliation is a creative failure, even though it will almost certainly translate into box-office success.

Our protagonist, Eddie, isn't a young New Yorker on the make but an unlucky-in-love 40-year-old who intervenes when a blonde bombshell named Lila is apparently mugged on a San Francisco street. They get married quickly, and before they've consummated their relationship, because she's been threatened with a job transfer to Holland. What he finds out about her on the honeymoon is that she's a former cocaine addict who's $27,000 in debt and doesn't even really have a job. She doesn't slobber the way the original Lila does; she spews food and juice through her nostrils because she destroyed her nose with coke.

She's not an awkward virgin but a demonic bed partner with a sadomasochistic streak. And she's so dumb that she can't keep it in her head that her husband's full name is Edward, not Edmund. When Lila gets her sunburn (in Cabo San Lucas, not Miami), Eddie meets and falls for a brunette named Miranda. She's not crass and obnoxious the way Cybill Shepherd's WASP dream was; she's sporty and fun and seems like a lovely person in every way.

What the Farrelly Brothers have done is to retain the outline of the original movie's plot while turning it upside down—Eddie gets the golden girl to begin with, only to discover that she's a ghoul. The less glamorous and more down-to-earth woman is the one for him. But the nagging, unforgettable point of the original is that there *is* no girl for Lenny, and never will be—that Lenny is a person with an unsatisfiable appetite because there's nothing inside him to nourish. Charles Grodin's performance as Lenny is unmatchable because, like the movie itself, he doesn't flinch from inhabiting the worst aspects of his character. Stiller's Eddie is just another of his patented schlubs, almost exactly the same person he played in *There's Something About Mary*, 10 years older.

Most telling, though, is that everybody knows someone like Lenny. Indeed, everything in the 1972 *Heartbreak Kid* could actually have happened, and doubtless has on many occasions: Doesn't everybody know one person who had a honeymoon so disastrous that it ended the marriage? But most of the things that happen to Eddie could only happen to a character in a Farrelly Brothers movie. The emotional ruthlessness of the original film has been replaced by anything-goes ribaldry that includes a glimpse of a sex scene between a girl and a donkey.

The Heartbreak Kid (1972) is a movie so difficult to watch at times that you never want to see it twice. *The Heartbreak Kid* (2007) is so routine an R-rated farce that you've seen it before, and don't need to see it again. ♦

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Pop star Britney Spears temporarily loses custody of her children to their back-up dancer and rapper father, Kevin Federline. —News item

Parody

the weekly Standard
October 15, 2007

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